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NO. 1

GLADSTONE  
  
JULY

# TALES FROM THE CRYPT

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



ENOCH





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THAT WRETCH, THE VAULT-KEEPER, HAS SABOTAGED THIS ISSUE OF TALES FROM THE CRYPT BECAUSE I GOT MY MAG ON THE NEWSSTANDS BEFORE HIS VAULT OF HORROR! HE CREPT INTO THE PRINT SHOP THE NIGHT BEFORE WE WENT TO PRESS AND SWITCHED AROUND PAGES 5 AND 6 OF WILL ELDER'S STORY... TWO FOR THE SHOW JUST TO CONFUSE YOU

READERS AND MAKE ME MAD! BUT SINCE WE PRINT THE COVERS LAST, I FOUND OUT IN TIME TO WARN YOU! ONCE HE'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THIS I'M GONNA TAKE ONE OF HIS RAGS AND—HEH, HEH—GET EVEN! JUST WAIT!

#### This Issue's Credits

From **Tales From the Crypt** 33 (1952):

Front cover by Jack Davis.

"Lower Berth," art by Jack Davis.

"This Trick'll Kill You," art by George Evans and Jack Kamen.

"Grim Fairy Tale," art by Jack Kamen.

"None but the Lonely Heart," art by Graham Ingels.

From **Crime Suspense** 17 (1953):

"Touch and Go," art by Johnny Craig, adapted from a story by Ray Bradbury.

"One for the Money..." art by Jack Kamen.

"Fired," art by Al Williamson and Frank Frazetta.

"...Two for the Show," art by Bill Elder.

All stories colored by Marie Severin.

# DREADFUL PLEASURES

by Jim Twitchell

Horror art is not, strictly speaking, a genre; it is rather a collection of motifs in a usually predictable sequence that gives us a specific physiological effect—the shivers. As the Fat Boy said in Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*, "I want to make your skin crawl."

We do not have to know what is going on to be affected. An audience, in fact, may search for artificial horror without much intellectual explanation or sophistication. The art demands audience participation or, better yet, conspiracy: like children huddled around the campfire asking for "just one more scary story."

No one has ever tracked the major carriers of horror—the vampire, the werewolf, and the "hulk with no name"—from their lairs in the subconscious, up through folklore, into the printed text of *Dracula*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Frankenstein*. From them came a veritable jungle of cinematic monsters.

Critics have uniformly neglected the word they so readily invoke—horror. It is a difficult word primarily because we think we know what it means: what is horrible is what we are frightened of. Give any journeyman moviemaker a razor and a young lady, or lumbering beast and a shrieking ingenue, and he should be able to scare the wits out of any audience. This is true as far as it goes, but horror really refers to a rather specific effect of that fright. To understand the meaning of

"horror" we are initially taken back to the latin word *horrere*, which means "to bristle," and it describes the way the hair stands on end during moments of shivering excitement. From this comes creeping flesh or, more simply, the "creeps." Hence both real and artificial horror—such as in *Tales From the Crypt*—offer a moment of ecstatic dread, a second of full-passioned fixity, of panic and exultation. The experience is commonly known as gooseflesh. What we call gooseflesh is usually caused by abrupt changes in body temperature and is the warm-blooded animal's attempt to shove up its thermostat. Our teeth chatter, knees knock, and skin shivers. We stand still and shudder, suddenly paralyzed.

At the height of horror we **must** scream or the tension, the pressure inside us, will cause us to go **insane!**

Terror, as differentiated from horror, must start anew in each generation, not because the objects we fear are so changeable, but because the images of them are. We now don't fear space invaders; we fear what we might bring back from space. A generation from now there will be a different "terror in the aisles." But horror is different. We will keep returning to watch the werewolf transform, or the vampire bite the virgin, or Dr. Frankenstein experiment in the laboratory, or Dr. Jekyll meet Mr. Hyde, and we will probably continue this interest until we resolve whatever it is in these myths that is unresolved within

*(continued on inside back cover)*

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# THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! GOT A COLLECTORS' ITEM FOR YOU FIENDS! GOT A REAL GREAT CHILLER-DILLER! GIVE THE MAN YOUR GRIMY LITTLE DIME IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY, AND COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! THIS IS THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY WITH ANOTHER OF MY TALES OF HORROR! SO SIT DOWN ON THE TANBARK FLOOR, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURDLING YARN I CALL...

## LOWER BERTH!



LONG BEFORE THE ADVENT OF RADIO, MOVIES, TELEVISION AND COMIC BOOKS, THE ONLY ENTERTAINMENT FOLKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ENJOYED WERE THE TRAVELING CARNIVALS, WHICH SET UP THEIR GAILY COLORED TENTS ON VACANT TRACTS OF LAND AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF THEIR TOWNS! ABOUT 80 YEARS AGO, ONE OF THESE CARNIVALS CAME TO A SMALL TOWN IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS...



RIGHT THIS WAY, FOLKS!  
SEE THE *SIDE-SHOW*! SEE  
THE *GREATEST COLLECTION*  
OF *ODDITIES* EVER TO BE  
ASSEMBLED UNDER ONE  
TENT! RIGHT THIS WAY,  
FOLKS!



THE SIDE SHOW OF THIS PARTICULAR CARNIVAL WAS OWNED BY A MAN NAMED ERNEST FEELEY! PATIENTLY, OVER THE YEARS, HE HAD ASSEMBLED A FABULOUS COLLECTION OF ODDITIES AND FREAKS! HE HAD THE *USUAL* ATTRACTIONS...

SEE *FANNY, THE FAT LADY*, FOLKS! FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS OF *FEMALE PULCHRITUDE*! SEE *HADNAR, THE SWORD-SWALLOWER*... *SKULL-FACE, THE LIVING SKELETON*... *FEGO, THE FIRE-EATER*...



BUT ERNEST FEELEY HAD ONE ATTRACTION... A *HEAD-LINE* ATTRACTION... THAT NEVER FAILED TO DRAW THE CROWDS... TO SEPARATE THE CURIOUS FROM THEIR QUARTERS...

AND *LAST BUT NOT LEAST*, FOLKS... THE *STAR ATTRACTION* OF FEELEY'S SIDE-SHOW... THE MOST *UNUSUAL* ODDITY EVER TO BE PUT ON DISPLAY *ANYWHERE... ANYTIME!* *INSIDE... IN ITS ORIGINAL SARCOPHAGUS... IS MYRNA, THE ONLY FEMALE EGYPTIAN MUMMY IN EXISTENCE!* *TWENTY-FIVE CENTS, FOLKS! RIGHT THIS WAY...*



MYRNA, THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY, WAS OWNED BY *ZACHARY CLING*, A RETIRED ARCHEOLOGIST! ERNEST FEELEY PAID ZACHARY CLING A VERY LARGE SALARY FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF EXHIBITING MYRNA...

... AND *NOW*, FOLKS... IF YOU WILL STEP THIS WAY... *DOCTOR CLING*, WHO *FOUND MYRNA THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY*, WILL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT HER AND *SHOW HER TO YOU*...



FIVE TIMES A DAY, ZACHARY CLING WOULD NARRATE HOW HE DISCOVERED MYRNA, AND THEN SHOW HER TO THE GAPING CUSTOMERS! HE'D EVEN *UNDO* PART OF HER *WRAP-PINGS*...

MYRNA, THE ONLY FEMALE EGYPTIAN MUMMY IN AMERICA WAS FOUND IN THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS BY MY EXPEDITION! HER TOMB WAS DEEP IN THE CLIFFS THAT TOWER OVER THE NILE RIVER...



'ON THE TOMB WALLS, WE FOUND THE INSCRIPTIONS DESCRIBING HER INCARCERATION! IT SEEMS THAT MYRNA, OR *MYRANAH*, AS THE EGYPTIANS CALLED HER, WAS A LADY-IN-WAITING TO THE PHARAOH'S WIFE ...

BRING ME MY PERFUME, MYRANAH! YES, MISTRESS!



'MYRANAH WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL, AND SOON CAUGHT THE PHARAOH'S FANCY! BUT LOYAL MYRANAH, FAITHFUL TO HER MISTRESS, REPELLED THE PHARAOH'S ADVANCES...

DO NOT *STRUGGLE*, MY PET! I AM YOUR *KING*! YOU MUST *DO AS I WISH*!

NO! NO! I WILL NOT! NEVER! NEVER!



'THE PHARAOH, IN ANGER, ORDERED THAT SHE BE BURIED ALIVE AS PUNISHMENT! MYRANAH WAS FORCIBLY WRAPPED IN THE CEREMONIAL BURIAL WINDINGS ...

SHE *FIGHTS* LIKE A CAT, SIRE!

SHE WILL *FIGHT NO MORE*! HURRY!

EEEMMMPH!





... AND SO, FOR *FOUR THOUSAND YEARS*, THIS *POOR GIRL* LAY IN HER *TOMB* UNTIL I *UNCOVERED HER!* AND NOW... I *GIVE YOU...*

**MYRNA!**

GASP! CHOKES!

THE MUMMIFIED BODY OF THE UNFORTUNATE SERVANT GIRL STOOD IN ITS SARCOPHAGUS, ITS ARMS FOLDED ACROSS ITS CHEST! THE CARNIVAL CUSTOMERS NEVER FAILED TO GASP AND SCREAM WHENEVER DOCTOR CLING WOULD UNCOVER IT...

AND NOW... I WILL *REMOVE* SOME OF THE *WRAPPINGS!*

IF THE SIGHT OF THE MUMMY WAS REVOLTING, HER UNWRAPPED FACE WAS EVEN MORE SO! THE WRINKLED DRIED FLESH CLUNG TO HER SKULL LIKE WET TISSUE PAPER! HER EYES HAD RECEDED DEEP INTO THEIR SOCKETS! LIPS WERE DRAWN TIGHTLY BACK IN A LEERING GRIN! SOME CRIED OUT... SOME TURNED AWAY...

GOOD LORD!

BUT THERE WERE ALWAYS MORE THE NEXT NIGHT! MORE OF THE CURIOUS! WORD TRAVELED FAST IN SMALL TOWNS! THEY FLOCKED TO SEE MYRNA... SHE WELL EARNED HER KEEP! ERNEST FEELEY PAID ZACHARY CLING HIS SALARY HAPPILY! AND THEN, WHEN THE CARNIVAL HIT THAT SMALL OZARK TOWN...

YOU MR. FEELEY? MY NAME'S *JEB SICKLES!* I UNNERSTAN' YOU *OWN* THIS HERE SIDE-SHOW, MR. FEELEY! I THINK MEBBE YOU MIGHT BE *INTERESTED* IN WHAT I GOT!

WHAT'S THAT, MR. SICKLES?

I'M THE *DOO 'ROUND* THESE PARTS, MR. FEELEY! AIN'T GOT NO *LICENCE* OR NUTHIN', BUT FOLKS *LIKE* WHAT I *DO* FOR 'EM SO THEY *COME T'ME!* 'BOUT TWO YEARS AGO, THIS HERE *CRONE* CAME DOWN FROM THE *MOUNTAINS!* I'D NEVER LAID EYES ON 'ER *B'FORE!* SHE *BEGGED* ME T'COME *BACK* WITH HER...

LOOK, MR. SICKLES! I'M A *BUSY MAN!* GET TO THE *POINT!* WHAT *IS* IT YOU'VE GOT THAT I'D BE *INTERESTED* IN?

I'LL GET TO IT, MR. FEELEY! TAKE IT *EASY!* ANYWAY, THIS OLD CRONE *BEGGED* ME SO BAD I *WENT!* SHE TOL' ME HER SON WAS *SICK...* *TERRIBLE SICK!* SHE SAID HE WAS *A-DYIN'!* SHE TOOK ME UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO THIS HERE *CAVE!* I *NEARLY THROW'D UP* AT WHAT I SAW!

WHAT WAS IT, MR. SICKLES?





'IT WAR HER SON, MR. FEELEY! HER SON HAD TWO HEADS! IT WAS HORRIBLE...'

CHOKES!

KIN YUH... KIN YUH DO ANYTHING FOR ENOCH?



'HE WAS TOO FAR GONE FOR ME T'SAVE! HE DIED 'BOUT AN HOUR AFTER WE GOT T' THE CAVE...'

I'M SORRY, MA'AM! I DONE ALL I COULD! ENOCH IS DEAD!

TAKE 'IM AWAY! TAKE 'IM... SOB... OUT OF MY SIGHT!



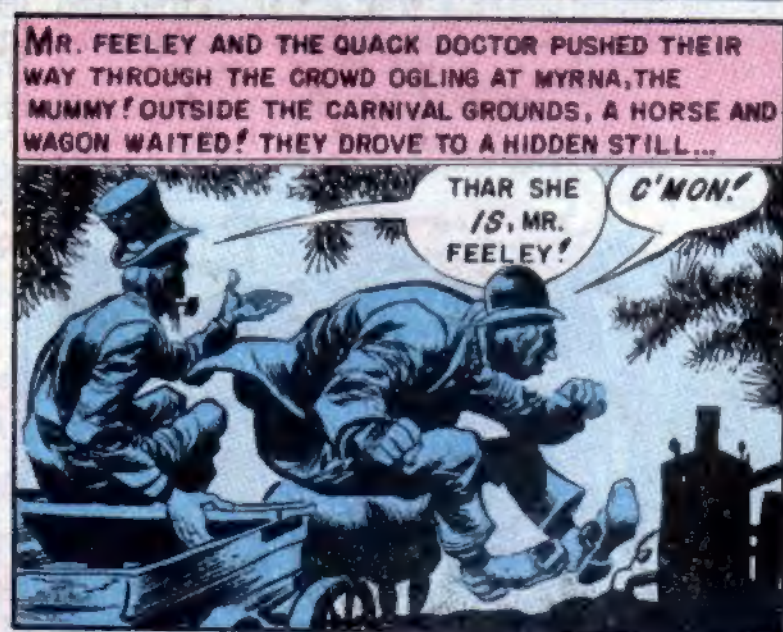
HE MUSTA BEEN TWENNY-TWO, MR. FEELEY! I TOOK HIS BODY BAGG DOWN THE MOUNTAIN AND PUT IT IN A MOONSHINE STILL! I DIDN'T WAN' NOBODY T' SEE IT!

AND YOU STILL HAVE IT... THE TWO-HEADED BODY?



IT'S BEEN IN THE STILL FOR TWO YEARS, MR. FEELEY! THE MOONSHINE SEEMS T'HAVE PRESERVED IT! YOU...

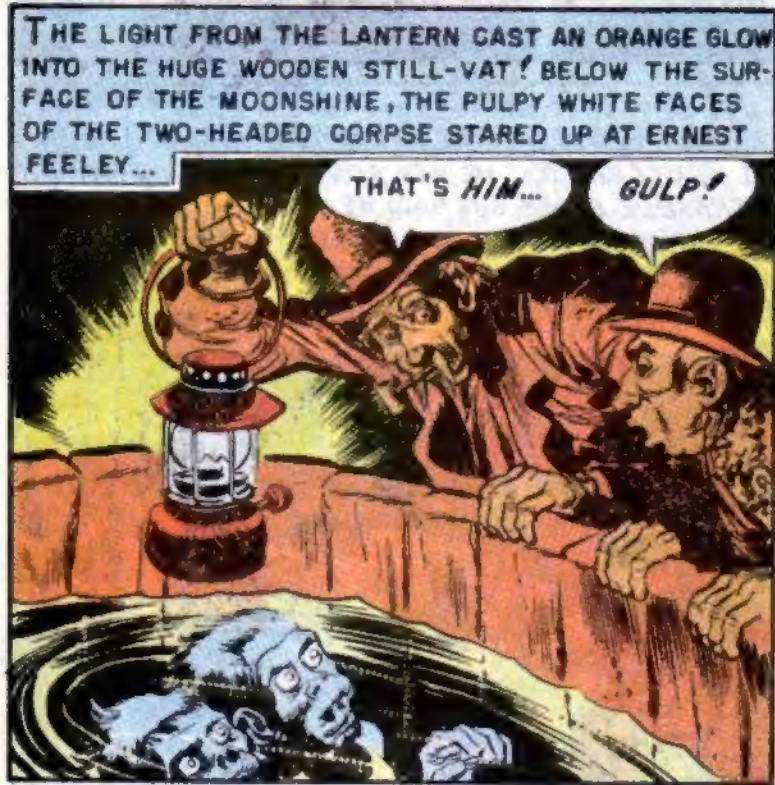
TAKE ME TO IT! QUICKLY!



MR. FEELEY AND THE QUACK DOCTOR PUSHED THEIR WAY THROUGH THE CROWD OGLING AT MYRNA, THE MUMMY! OUTSIDE THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS, A HORSE AND WAGON WAITED! THEY DROVE TO A HIDDEN STILL...

THAR SHE IS, MR. FEELEY!

C'MON!



THE LIGHT FROM THE LANTERN CAST AN ORANGE GLOW INTO THE HUGE WOODEN STILL-VAT! BELOW THE SURFACE OF THE MOONSHINE, THE PULPY WHITE FACES OF THE TWO-HEADED CORPSE STARED UP AT ERNEST FEELEY...

THAT'S HIM...

GULP!



ERNEST TURNED TO JEB SICKLES... HIS EYES WIDE... HIS FACE FLUSHED ...

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN MY SHOW, JEB? DO WHAT OLD DOG CLING DOES! EXHIBIT THIS HERE ENOCH! TELL HOW YOU GOT HIM! I'LL PAY YOU A GOOD SALARY!

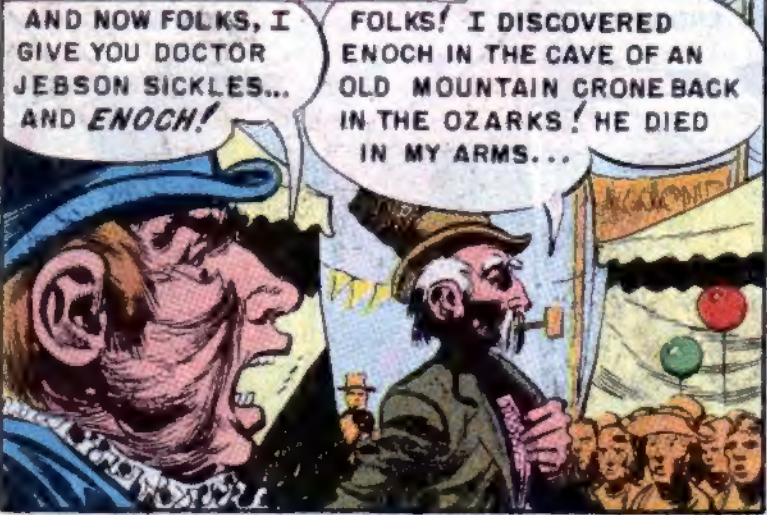
JOIN UP WITH YOU FELLERS, EH? WAL, I DUNNO! I... I GUESS I'D LIKE THAT!



SO, JEB SICKLES TOOK HIS TWO-HEADED PRESERVED BODY OUT OF THE STILL AND JOINED ERNEST FEELEY'S SIDE-SHOW! ENOCH WAS PLACED IN A SPECIALLY MADE GLASS TANK FILLED WITH FORMAL-DEHYDE, AND PUT ON EXHIBIT...

AND NOW FOLKS, I GIVE YOU DOCTOR JEBSON SICKLES... AND **ENOCH!**

FOLKS! I DISCOVERED ENOCH IN THE CAVE OF AN OLD MOUNTAIN CRONE BACK IN THE OZARKS! HE DIED IN MY ARMS...



WHEN JEB DREW BACK THE CURTAIN REVEALING THE PASTY-SKINNED BLOATED TWO-HEADED CORPSE OF ENOCH, THE SIDE-SHOW CUSTOMERS WOULD CRINGE AND SHUDDER IN REVULSION...

AND NOW, I GIVE YOU... **ENOCH! THE TWO-HEADED MAN!**

CHOKES! GULP!

COUGH



IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR ERNEST FEELEY TO REALIZE THAT THE THING IN THE HUGE GLASS TANK WAS A REALLY VALUABLE EXHIBIT AND DESERVED STAR BILLING, LIKE MYRNA...

THAT'S RIGHT, JEB! I'M MOVIN' YOU UP TO STAR ATTRACTION! YOU'LL SHARE IT WITH DOG CLING, HERE!

THANKS, MR. FEELEY!

HMMPH...



SO ENOCH WAS PLACED OPPOSITE MYRNA... AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, JEB SICKLES AND ZACH CLING EXHIBITED THEIR ODDITIES TO THE CURIOUS WHO'D PAID THEIR QUARTERS TO SEE THEM.

...MYRNA...

...ENOCH...



FIVE TIMES A DAY, MYRNA'S ROTTED BROWN WRAPPINGS WERE REMOVED FROM HER MUMMIFIED FACE...

GASP...

CHOKES...



AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, THE CURTAIN HIDING ENOCH'S TANK WAS WITHDRAWN REVEALING THE TWISTING, TURNING PRESERVED CORPSE...



AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, AS THE CROWD OGLED AND GASPED... PASTY-SKINNED, TWO-HEADED ENOCH, FLOATING IN HIS FORMAL-DEHYDE WORLD, STARED WITH GLAZED EYES AT THE PUTRID, MUMMIFIED, UNWRAPPED FACE OF MYRNA THE MUMMY...





THE CARNIVAL MOVED ON FROM TOWN TO TOWN! THE CROWDS FLOCKED TO SEE ENOCH AND MYRNA! AND JEALOUSY BETWEEN ZACH CLING AND JEB SICKLES FLAMED...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE CUTTING MY SALARY? IF IT WASN'T FOR MYRNA...

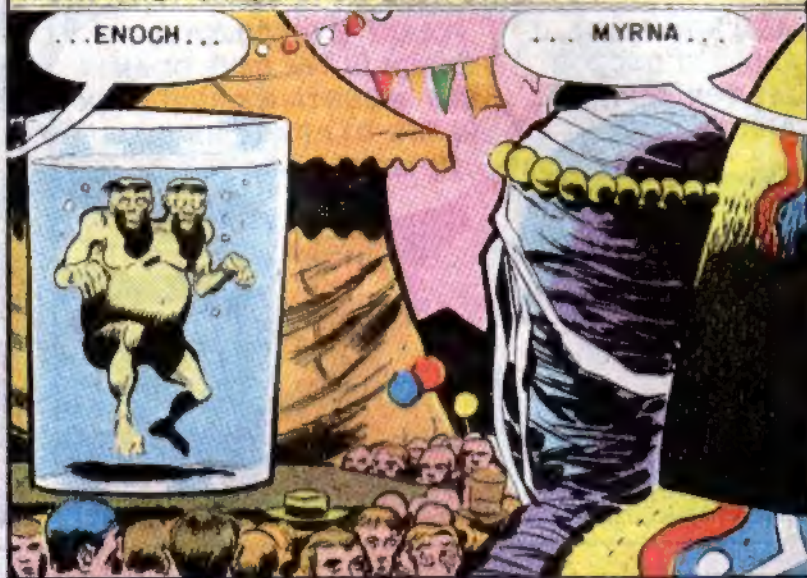
ENOCH PULLS 'EM IN TOO, ZACH! I'VE BEEN UNDERPAYING JEB! HE AND YOU GET THE SAME FROM NOW ON! I'M LOWERIN' YOUR PAY, AND RAISIN' HIS!



THE BLOATED BODY WITH THE STARING PAIRS OF EYES SWAYED IN THE FORMALDEHYDE! THE DRIED REMAINS IN THE ROTTED WRAPPINGS STOOD SILENTLY! FIVE TIMES A DAY THEY GAZED UPON EACH OTHER...

... ENOCH ...

... MYRNA ...



THEN ERNEST FEELEY... ALWAYS THE BUSINESS MAN... ANNOUNCED...

I'M MOVIN' YOU AND MYRNA OUT FRONT, GLING! WE NEED A DRAW FOR THE ADMISSIONS! JEB AND ENOCH ARE THE STARS NOW...



AND SO, WHEN THE ROTTED WRAPPINGS WERE REMOVED FROM MYRNA'S SUNKEN, MUMMIFIED EYES, SHE LOOKED OUT ACROSS THE CROWD AND SAW NOTHING...

I GIVE YOU... MYRNA...



AND WHEN THE CURTAIN WAS PULLED BACK UNCOVERING ENOCH'S TANK, HE LOOKED OUT ACROSS THE CROWD AND SAW NOTHING...

I GIVE YOU... ENOCH!



THUS, IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT, WHEN THE CARNIVAL FOLK LAY ASLEEP, A DRIED AND BONEY HAND MOVED... SLOWLY... HESITANTLY... PULLING AWAY ITS ROTTED BROWN WRAPPINGS...



... WHILE A BLOATED, PALE HAND SLID UPWARD AND OVER THE TANK-RIM, PULLING ITS CHALKY, PULPY BODY AFTER IT...





THE MORNING HEARD THE SIDE-SHOW TENT ECHO WITH ANGRY VOICES...

HE STOLE ENOUGH!

HE STOLE MYRNA!

CALM DOWN, YOU TWO!

ERNEST QUIETED THE RAGING ODDITY OWNERS...

USE YOUR HEADS, YOU FOOLS! IF BOTH ARE MISSING, NEITHER OF YOU COULD HAVE DONE IT!

OLD DOC CLING KNELT TO THE TAN-BARK AND PICKED UP A MUSTY-SMELLING FRAGMENT...

A PIECE OF MYRNA'S WRAPPINGS!

DROPS OF FORMALDEHYDE! THEY GO THAT WAY!

THE THREE MEN FOLLOWED THE FRAGMENTS OF MUMMY WRAPPINGS AND THE DROPLETS OF FORMALDEHYDE OUT OF THE SIDE-SHOW TENT AND INTO THE MORNING SUNLIGHT! THE TRAIL WAS CLEAR... VERY CLEAR...

IT LEADS TO THAT HOUSE!

LOOK AT THE SIGN!

GASP! JUSTICE OF THE... GOOD LORD!

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE WAS VERY FRIENDLY! HE TOLD THE SIDE-SHOW MEN ALL HE KNEW...

COUPLE CAME LAST NIGHT! YEP! WANTED TO GET MARRIED! I DID IT! I PERFORMED THE CEREMONY!

WASN'T THERE ANYTHING... ER... STRANGE ABOUT THEM?

SHUCKS! ALL I CAN SAY IS THEY MUST'VE BEEN DRINKING! SMELLED MIGHTY BAD... LIKE AS IF THEY'D BEEN! BUT FIVE BUCKS IS FIVE BUCKS!

DIDN'T YOU SEE...?

DIDN'T SEE NUTHIN'! CAN'T SEE! I'M BLIND, Y'KNOW!

BLIND!

GOOD LORD!



HEH, HEH! CAREFUL NOW! **DON'T PEEK!** HERE COMES THE **FINISH!** BRACE YOURSELVES! FIRST, LET ME SAY THAT MR. FEELEY, JEB, AND ZACH LOST MYRNA AND ENOCH'S TRAIL AFTER THEY LEFT THE J.P. JUST COULDN'T FIND 'EM! IN FACT, IT WASN'T TILL A YEAR LATER, WHEN THE CARNIVAL RETURNED TO THE VERY OZARK TOWN WHERE ENOCH HAD FIRST JOINED THE SIDE-SHOW...



... THAT MR. FEELEY HEARD ABOUT THE STRANGE DOIN'S UP IN THE MOUNTAINS...

SOMEBODY SAID THEY **SEEN 'EM**, BUT I DON'T **BELIEVE 'EM!** WHO EVER HEARD OF A **LIVIN' MUMMY** AND A **TWO-HEADED CORPSE...**

**WHERE? WHERE?** DID THEY **SEE 'EM?**



UP IN THE **OLD CRONE'S CAVE!** SHE'S **DEAD** NOW! BUT THE **FOLKS 'ROUND HERE** ARE **MIGHTY SUPERSTITIOUS!** IF'N YOU ASK **ME**, THEY'RE **SEEIN' THINGS!** NOW...

**JEB'LL TAKE ME THERE!** HE KNOWS WHERE IT IS!



THEY WENT! JEB AND ZACH... WHO'D STAYED ON WITH THE CARNIVAL AS HANDY MEN... AND MR. FEELEY! THEY WENT UP THE MOUNTAIN TO THE OLD CRONE'S CAVE...

**LOOK!**

**GOOD LORD!**

**IT'S THEM!**



AND THE THREE CARNIVAL MEN DRAGGED THEIR LONG-LOST ODDITIES BACK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN...

**MYRNA! MY MYRNA!**

**ENOCH! MY BOY!**

**AT LAST! AFTER OVER A YEAR!**



BUT THE THREE MEN WERE OUT OF EARSHOT WHEN THE **WAIL** DRIFTED OUT FROM DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF THE CRONE'S CAVE! THEY NEVER **SAW** THE **INFANT-THING** CRAWL OUT INTO THE SUNLIGHT... ITS EYES STREAMING WITH TEARS... **CRYING FOR ITS PARENTS...**



HEH, HEH! YEP! THAT'S **IT**, KIDDIES! THAT'S **MY STORY!** YEP! **ENOCH** OF THE **DOUBLE DOMES** WAS **MY OLD MAN**, AND **MYRNA** THE **MUMMY** WAS **MY OLD LADY!** YOU **MIGHT** SAY, THE **MUMMY** WAS **MY MOMMY!** BY THE WAY! I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE'S A CARNIVAL **TODAY... EIGHTY YEARS LATER...**

THAT STILL EXHIBITS A **MUMMY** AND A **TWO-HEADED PRESERVED CORPSE!** IF ANY OF YOU **SEE THEM...** **WRITE ME!** I WANT TO SEND A **CARD!** IT'S THEIR **ANNIVERSARY** NEXT MONTH!





# THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! NOW IT'S TIME FOR A JAUNT INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, CREEPS! THIS IS YOUR VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO RELATE THIS *BLOOD-CURDLING TALE* FROM MY COLLECTION! SO COME IN, SIT DOWN ON THAT *BLOOD-STAINED HOTEL ROOM RUB*, AND I'LL TELL YOU HOW IT GOT THAT WAY! I CALL THIS *SICKENING SOJOURN* INTO THE *SCREAMING SEMI-DARKNESS* OF *SORDIDNESS*...

**THIS TRICK'LL KILL YOU!**



EVANS & KAMEN



HERBERT MARKINI MOVED THROUGH THE MILLING CALCUTTA CROWDS, MOPPING HIS PERSPIRATION-BATHED FACE! THE BLAZING INDIAN SUN WAS DIRECTLY OVERHEAD! THE HEAT WAS UNBEARABLE! HERBERT CURSED...

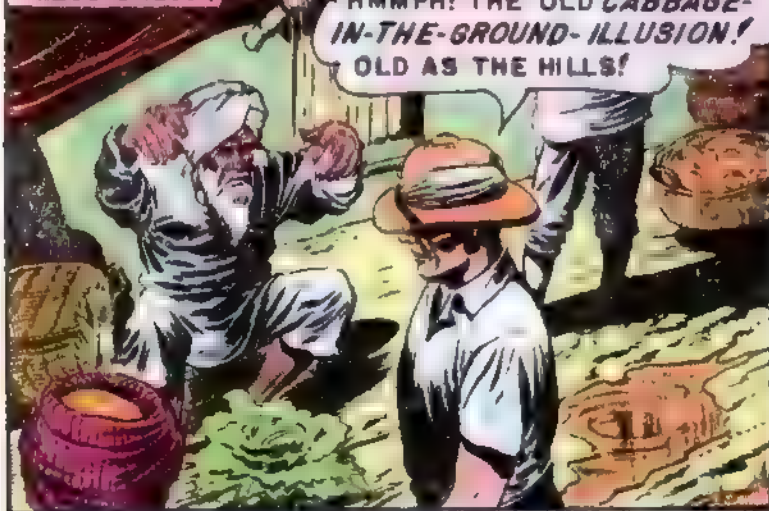
WHY I EVER CAME TO THIS DISEASE-INFESTED HELL-HOLE, I'LL NEVER KNOW! I HAVEN'T FOUND ONE NEW ILLUSION SINCE I'VE BEEN HERE! INDIAN FAKIRS! BAH! LUCKY THING I LEFT INEZ AT THE HOTEL! SHE'D PASS OUT IN THIS HEAT!





THE GREAT MARKINI, FAMOUS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR HIS ASTOUNDING FEATS OF MAGIC, PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE DARK-SKINNED THROG... STOPPING FOR A FEW MINUTES TO WATCH AS EACH SQUATTING INDIAN FAKIR WOULD PERFORM HIS TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS...

HMMPH! THE OLD CABBAGE-IN-THE-GROUND-ILLUSION! OLD AS THE HILLS!



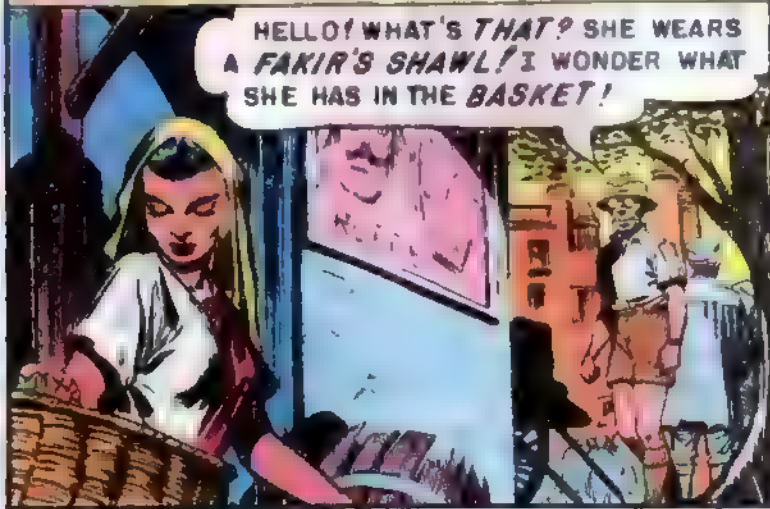
HERBERT MOVED DOWN THE LITTER-FILLED ALLEY TO WHERE THE INDIAN GIRL SQUATTED BEFORE HER ODDLY-SHAPED BASKET! THE CROWD BEHIND, OUT IN THE MARKET-PLACE, SEEMED TO FADE FROM EARSHOT! THE GIRL LOOKED UP AT MARKINI AND SMILED...

YOU... WANT... TRICK? I DO... FOR RUPEE!



SATISFIED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING NEW TO SEE, NOTHING HE COULD ADD TO HIS FABULOUS MAGIC ACT, HERBERT WOULD MOVE ON FROM ONE FAKIR TO THE NEXT! THEN, IN A DARK ALLEY OFF THE TEAMING MARKET PLACE, HE SAW HER! THE DARK-HAIRED, FLASHING-EYED INDIAN GIRL...

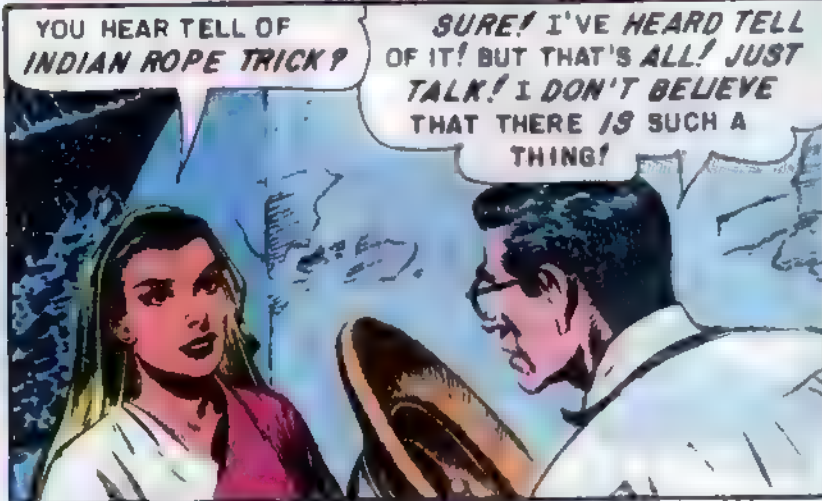
HELLO! WHAT'S THAT? SHE WEARS A FAKIR'S SHAWL! I WONDER WHAT SHE HAS IN THE BASKET!



THE COIN TINKLED TO THE COBBLE-STONES AT THE GIRL'S BARE FEET! SHE PICKED IT UP, EXAMINED IT, AND... LIFTING THE LID OFF THE BASKET... TOSSED THE COIN IN! HERBERT PEERED DOWN! INSIDE THE BASKET LAY A COIL OF HEAVY ROPE, OLD AND FRAYED...

YOU HEAR TELL OF INDIAN ROPE TRICK?

SURE! I'VE HEARD TELL OF IT! BUT THAT'S ALL! JUST TALK! I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THERE IS SUCH A THING!



THE GIRL PULLED A SMALL REED INSTRUMENT FROM THE FOLDS IN HER GOWN AND PUT IT TO HER LIPS! SHE TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND BEGAN TO BLOW SOFTLY! THE WEIRD NOTE TREMBLED! THE COIL OF ROPE IN THE BASKET STIRRED...

THE SINGLE NOTE CONTINUED! ONE END OF THE COIL OF ROPE STOOD UP... SWAYING LIKE AN ENTRANCED COBRA...

AND AS THE GIRL'S BREATH RAN OUT AND THE NOTE BEGAN TO FADE... THE END OF THE ROPE BEGAN TO RISE HIGHER AND HIGHER INTO THE AIR...

WHAT THE...?



GOOD LORD!



I DON'T BELIEVE IT!





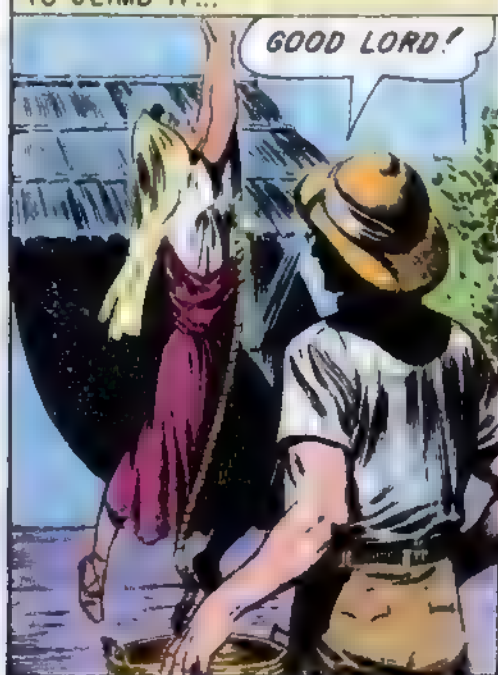
WHEN THE LAST VIBRATION ENDED, THE ROPE STOOD UPRIGHT AT ITS FULL UNCOILED LENGTH.. FIFTEEN... MAYBE TWENTY FEET INTO THE AIR.

ASTOUNDING!



THE GIRL GOT TO HER FEET AND MOVED TO THE ROPE! AS HERBERT WATCHED, HORRIFIED, SHE BEGAN TO CLIMB IT...

GOOD LORD!



SHE PULLED HERSELF EASILY, HAND OVER HAND, TILL SHE REACHED THE TOP...

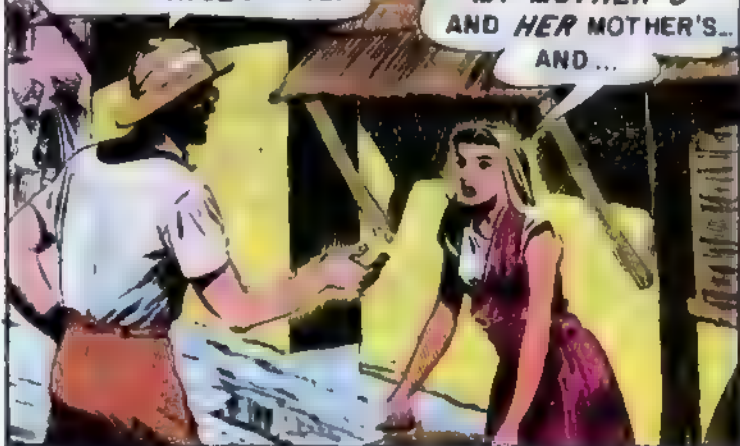
I'LL BUY IT! I'LL PAY YOU ANYTHING... ANYTHING!



THE DARK-HAIRED, FLASHING-EYED NATIVE GIRL SLID TO THE GROUND ONCE AGAIN AND THE ROPE COLLAPSED INTO THE BASKET...

HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT FOR THE TRICK? NAME YOUR PRICE, GIRL!

I CANNOT SELL THE ROPE! IT WAS MY MOTHER'S AND HER MOTHER'S... AND...



BAH! KEEP YOUR ROPE! TELL ME HOW IT IS DONE! TELL ME THE SECRET! I'LL MAKE MY OWN...

THERE IS NO SECRET, SAHIB! IT IS THE ROPE! YOU CANNOT MAKE ONE! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!



THE ROPE?! WHAT KIND OF NONSENSE IS THAT? IT'S AN ORDINARY ROPE! WHAT'S INSIDE? A WIRE? WHAT'S UNDER THE BASKET? A TRAP-DOOR? C'MON! I'LL PAY YOU FIVE HUNDRED RUPEES!

IT IS THE ROPE ITSELF, SAHIB! SEE?



THE GIRL LIFTED THE BASKET! THERE WAS NO TRAP DOOR BELOW... NO HOLE OUT OF WHICH A POLE COULD BE EXTENDED... NOTHING...

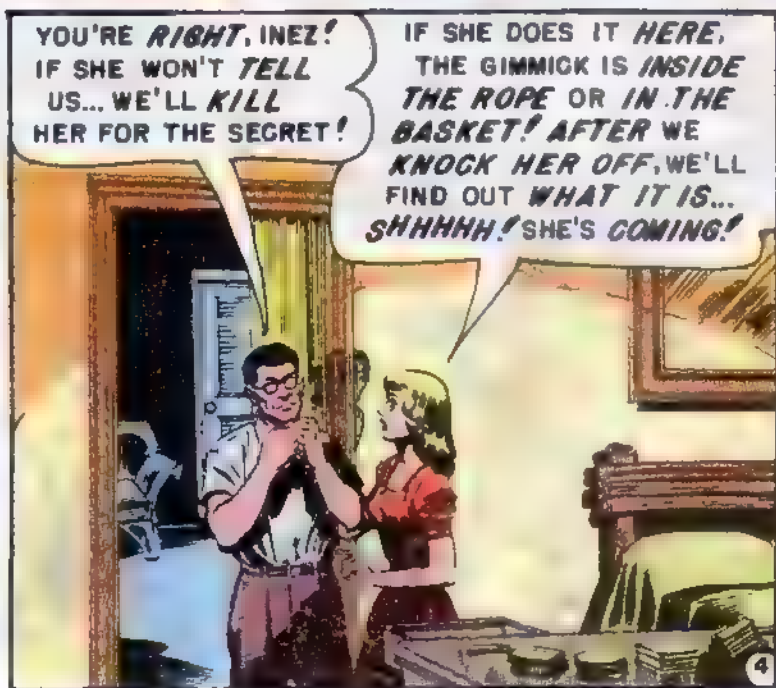
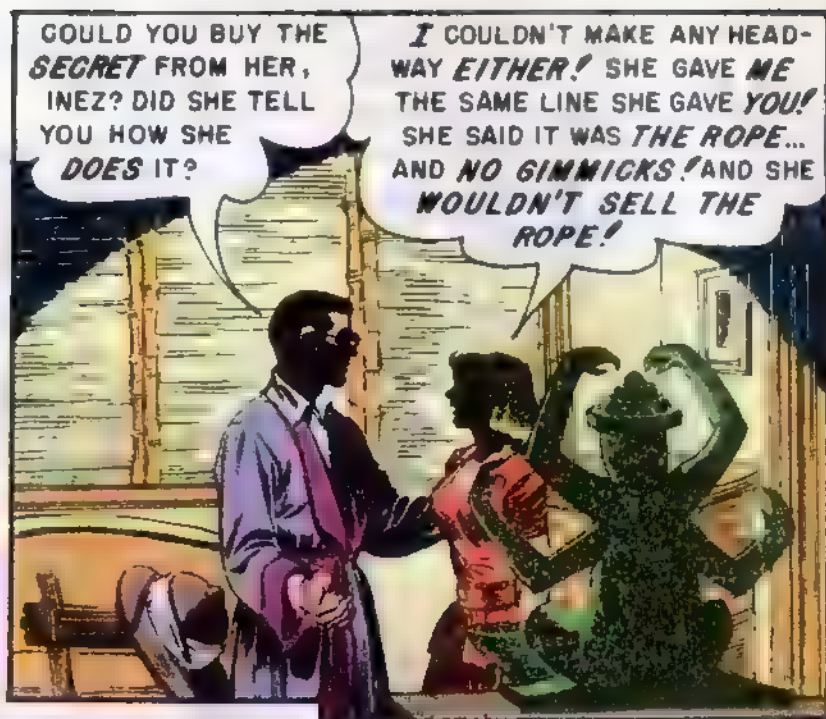
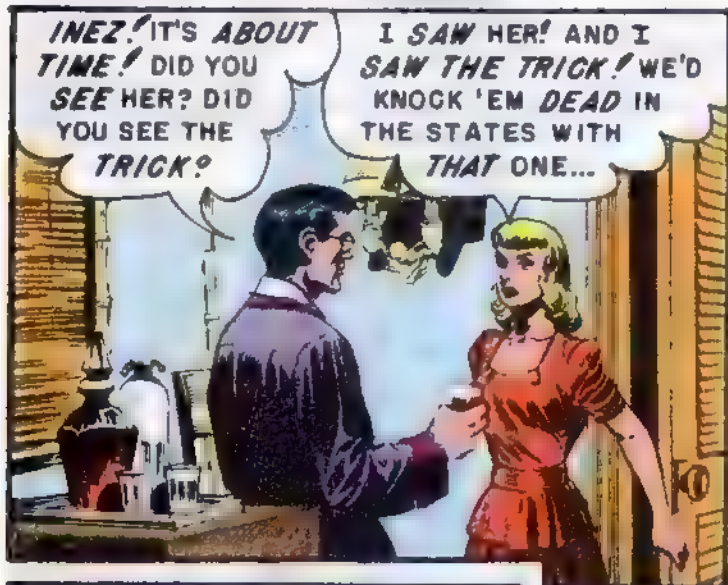
YOU SEE, SAHIB? IT IS THE ROPE! AND THE ROPE IS NOT FOR SALE!

IMPOSSIBLE! THERE MUST BE A TRICK TO IT! THERE MUST!



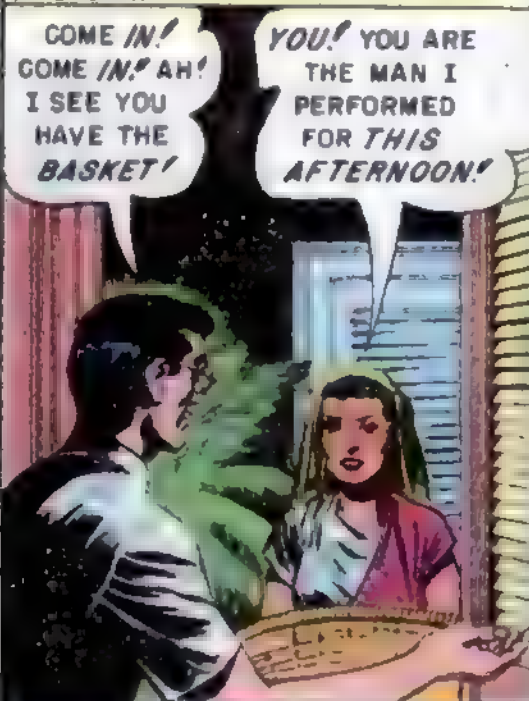


THAT NIGHT, THE GREAT MARKINI PACED HIS HOTEL ROOM NERVOUSLY! FINALLY THE DOOR OPENED AND A WOMAN ENTERED...



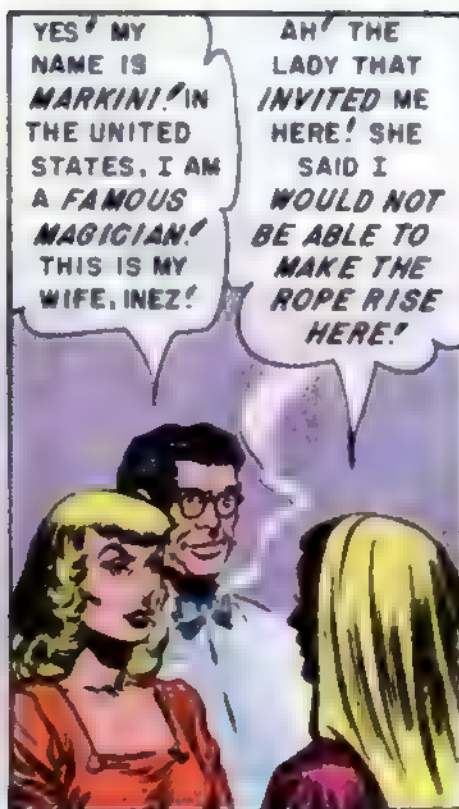


THERE WAS A TIMID KNOCK ON THE HOTEL ROOM DOOR! HERBERT SWUNG IT OPEN...



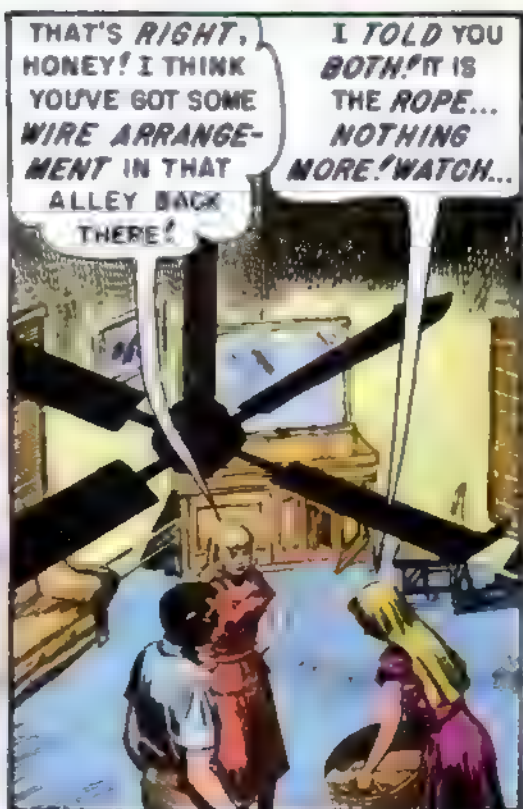
COME IN! COME IN! AH! I SEE YOU HAVE THE BASKET!

YOU! YOU ARE THE MAN I PERFORMED FOR THIS AFTERNOON!



YES! MY NAME IS MARKINI! IN THE UNITED STATES, I AM A FAMOUS MAGICIAN! THIS IS MY WIFE, INEZ!

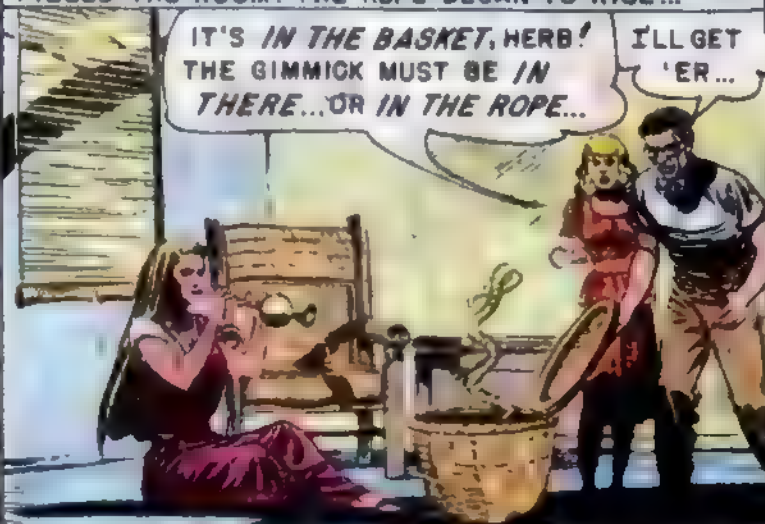
AH! THE LADY THAT INVITED ME HERE! SHE SAID I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE THE ROPE RISE HERE!



THAT'S RIGHT, HONEY! I THINK YOU'VE GOT SOME WIRE ARRANGEMENT IN THAT ALLEY BACK THERE!

I TOLD YOU BOTH! IT IS THE ROPE... NOTHING MORE! WATCH...

THE GIRL PLACED THE BASKET ON THE FLOOR OF THE ROOM! THEN SHE TOOK OUT THE CURIOUS REED INSTRUMENT AND BEGAN TO BLOW! THE WEIRD NOTE FILLED THE ROOM! THE ROPE BEGAN TO RISE...



IT'S IN THE BASKET, HERB! THE GIMMICK MUST BE IN THERE...OR IN THE ROPE...

I'LL GET 'ER...

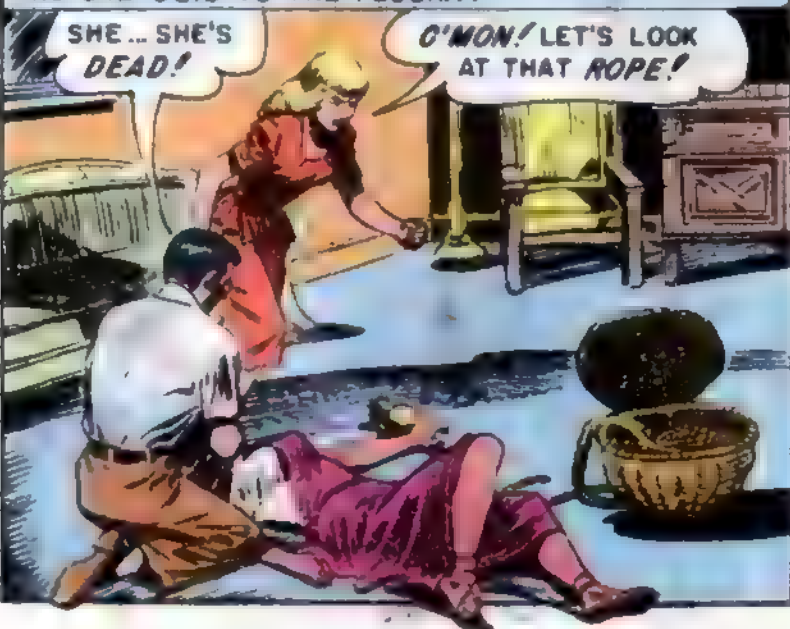
SUDDENLY...THE WEIRD-SOUNDING, TREMBLING NOTE WAS CUT SHORT! THE ROPE COLLAPSED! HERBERT'S POWERFUL FINGERS HELD THE INDIAN GIRL'S NECK IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP...



DON'T LET HER SCREAM, HERB!

I... GASP... WON'T...

SOON, THE THROTTLED NATIVE GIRL'S BODY WENT LIMP AND SHE SLID TO THE FLOOR...



SHE... SHE'S DEAD!

O'MON! LET'S LOOK AT THAT ROPE!

THE MURDERERS RUSHED TO THE COLLAPSED ROPE LYING ON THE HOTEL ROOM RUG! HERB SEARCHED THE AND EXAMINED IT CLOSELY! INEZ PICKED IT UP BASKET...



THE ROPE...IT'S NOT HOLLOW! THERE'S NO WIRE! IT'S...IT...

THERE'S NOTHING IN THE BASKET! NOTHING!



INEZ AND HERBERT STARED AT EACH OTHER...

NO GIMMICK!  
NO PROP!  
BUT... BUT...

WE SAW IT START  
RISING! IT  
WAS WORKING!



SUDDENLY INEZ'S GLANCE FELL!  
THE STRANGE-LOOKING REED  
INSTRUMENT WAS STILL CLUTCHED  
IN THE DEAD NATIVE GIRL'S HAND..

THE PIPE, HERB!  
TRY THE PIPE!

BUT... BUT  
WHAT GOOD  
WILL THAT  
DO?



HERB WRENCHED THE FLUTE-  
LIKE INSTRUMENT FROM THE  
CORPSE AND PUT IT TO HIS LIPS!  
THE WEIRD NOTE ECHOED THROUGH  
THE ROOM...

LOOK, HERB!  
LOOK!



THE FRAYED END OF THE ROPE BEGAN TO RISE...

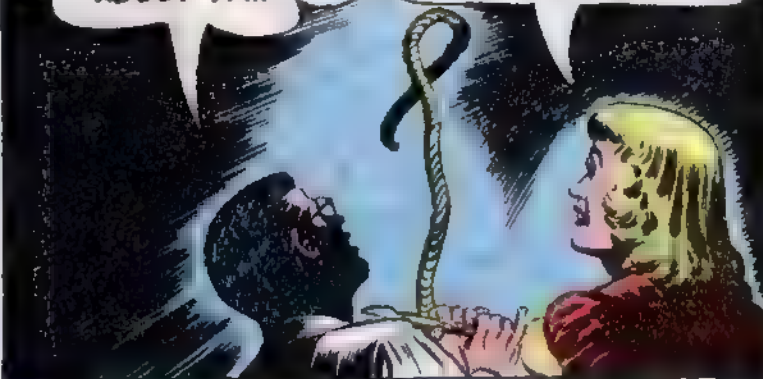
KEEP BLOWING, HERB!  
KEEP BLOWING!



HIGHER AND HIGHER THE ROPE ROSE UNTIL IT TOUCHED  
THE CEILING OF THE ROOM! HERB'S BREATH RAN OUT  
AND THE NOTE FADED! THE ROPE STOOD STIFFLY...

SHE...GASP...SHE WASN'T  
LYING! IT IS THE ROPE  
THERE'S SOMETHING  
ABOUT IT...

WE'VE GOT A  
GOLD MINE, HERB!  
A GOLD MINE!



INEZ MOVED TO THE ROPE! SHE CLOSED HER HANDS  
AROUND IT AND BEGAN TO PULL HERSELF UP...

IT HOLDS ME, HERB!  
I CAN CLIMB IT!

WE'LL KNOCK THEM DEAD.  
INEZ! JUST WAIT TILL  
WE GET BACK TO THE  
STATES! WE'LL...



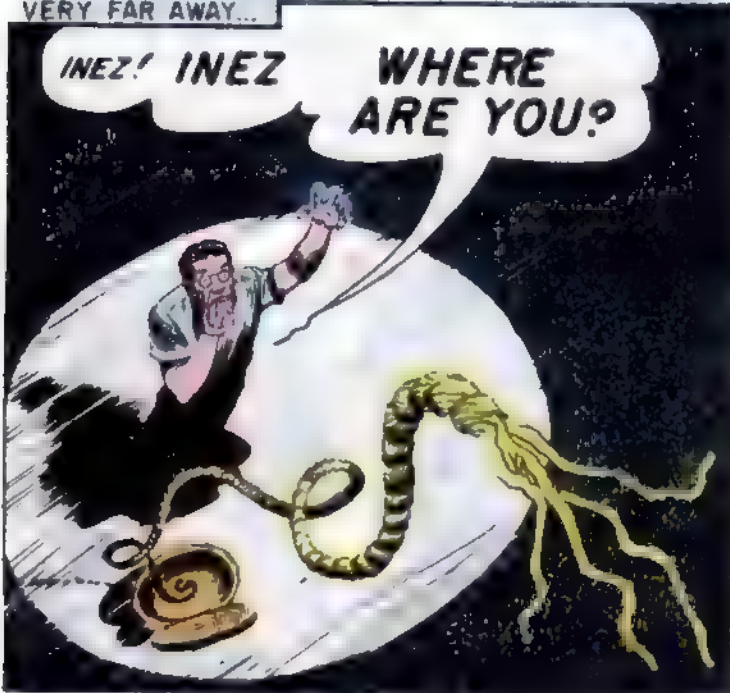
INEZ HAD REACHED THE TOP OF THE ROPE!  
SUDDENLY...HER FACE WAS CONTORTED IN PAIN!  
HER EYES BULGED IN HORROR...

HERB! I... I... EEEEEEEEEEE!





HERBERT MARKINI STARED AT THE SPOT NEAR THE CEILING WHERE INEZ HAD BEEN! SHE'D SIMPLY **VANISHED!** HER HYSTERICAL SHRIEK CAME FROM VERY FAR AWAY...



SUDDENLY A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPED OVER THE GREAT MARKINI! OBJECTS RAINED DOWN FROM NOWHERE ABOUT HIM... FALLING TO THE CALCUTTA HOTEL ROOM FLOOR! HORRIBLE OBJECTS! **QUIVERING PIECES OF INEZ'S BODY...**



THE ROPE CURLED UPWARD... THE FRAYED END STILL IN THE BASKET WHIPPED OUTWARD... **WRAPPING AROUND HERBERT'S NECK...**



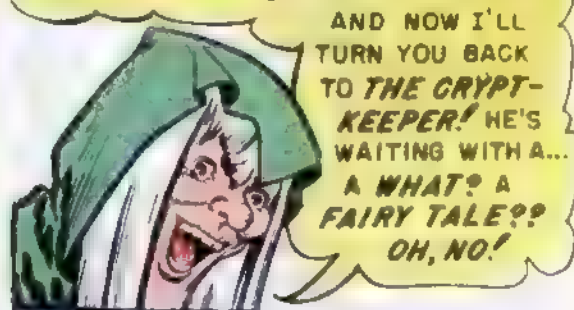
AND SLOWLY... STEADILY... THE ROPE CONTINUED TO RISE UNTIL...



THE COMPLAINTS OF NEIGHBORS BROUGHT THE MANAGER OF THE CALCUTTA HOTEL TO HERBERT AND INEZ MARKINI'S ROOM! HE FOUND THE MASTER MAGICIAN HANGING FROM A ROPE... SWAYING CRAZILY! THE ROPE ENDED AT THE CEILING... **APPARENTLY UNATTACHED...**



HEH, HEH! THAT ABOUT **WRAPS IT UP, KIDDIES... NEATLY KNOTTED!** WHEN THEY TRIED TO CUT POOR HERBIE DOWN, THE ROPE JUST **COLLAPSED** AND HE FELL TO THE FLOOR AMID **INEZ'S** DISMEMBERED REMAINS! AS FOR THE **INDIAN GIRL...** THEY FOUND **NO TRACE OF HER!** WHAT HAPPENED TO HER BODY? NEXT TIME YOU'RE IN **CALCUTTA**, LOOK FOR HER IN THAT **ALLEYWAY!** SHE'LL BE THERE... WITH HER **ROPE!** JUST BE CAREFUL! DON'T LET HER **STRING YOU ALONG!**





# A RARE E.C. OFFER

Seventeen years ago a small publishing company called **East Coast Comix** reprinted a dozen of the original E.C.'s in full color as regular 32-page comic books. Without national distribution the market was not able to sustain their continuation. Shortly after they ceased production we bought the remaining small inventory, realizing they would become **real collector's items** someday. With the return of E.C. through Gladstone, that day has come! None of these 1973 and '74 reprints is scheduled to be duplicated by Gladstone before 1992 and some later than that. The **Two Fisted Tales** and **Shock SuspenStories** comics have no place on our schedule at the present time. The following are available individually or as a lot while the **very limited supply lasts**.



☐ **1. The Crypt of Terror** 1, Feb., 1955.....\$12.00  
Planned to debut as E.C.'s fourth horror title, it instead became the last issue of **Tales From the Crypt**, number 46. It contains a Jack Davis werewolf story and George Evans' famous razor blade sizzler, "Blind Alleys." Highly recommended. Very very limited.

☐ **2. Weird Science** 15, Sept., 1952.....\$8.00  
Incredible issue, with the first E.C. story by Al Williamson, who quickly became a favorite, and "The Martians," one of Wallace Wood's best. Also, a photo and biography of Joe Orlando, who draws captive earthmen in "Burn Steer."

☐ **3. Shock SuspenStories** 12, Dec., 1953.....\$6.00  
Drug abuse is dealt with for one of the first times in comics in the powerful Joe Orlando effort, "The Monkey." Reed Crandall's "The Kidnapper" generated mail from many parents. Wally Wood touches on suicide in "The Fall Guy." And a murderous alcoholic is portrayed in "Deadline" by Jack Kamen.

☐ **4. The Haunt of Fear** 12, Mar., 1952.....\$5.00  
Two rotting corpse stories highlight an issue of great art by "Ghastly" Graham Ingels and Jack Davis. Johnny Craig has a story, biography and a photo. His story of a love triangle involves two shootings and a mysterious tattoo that miraculously implicates the killer.

☐ **5. Weird Fantasy** 13, May, 1952.....\$5.00  
Special issue with two tales illustrated by Wallace Wood, including "Home to Stay," an unforgettable adaptation of two Ray Bradbury short stories. E.C.'s science fiction and horror editor/artist Al Feldstein has a bio with photo.

☐ **6. Crime SuspenStories** 25, Oct., 1954.....\$5.00  
Jack Kamen's lead deals with multiple murder. Reed Crandall's story involves a knife and some "cutting up" during a prison break. Bernie Krigstein's effort chronicles madness, and George Evans' yarn weaves brutal fiction of a sadistic police lieutenant.

☐ **7. The Vault of Horror** 26, Aug., 1952.....\$5.00  
Putrid palpitations of a ghoul and a vampire in love, werewolves, walking corpses and a voodoo curse are all rendered in color by Johnny Craig, Jack Davis, Sid Check and Graham Ingels.

☐ **8. Shock SuspenStories** 6, Dec., 1952.....\$6.00  
One story each of crime, suspense, sci-fi and horror, plus a biography and photo of fan favorite Wally Wood. Graham Ingels illustrates a rare appearance of the Old Witch outside the horror titles. Wood's "Under Cover" is a shocker dealing with overt prejudice that was largely ignored by society in the 1950s. Great issue!

☐ **9. Two Fisted Tales** 34, July, 1953.....\$5.00  
Jack Davis writes and draws the lead western, "Betsy," and Wally Wood conceives "Trial by Arms," a medieval story of treachery and murder. John Severin inks a desert epic and George Evans illustrates his specialty—a finale about World War I flying aces.

☐ **10. The Haunt of Fear** 23, Jan., 1954.....\$5.00  
Jack Kamen does one of his famous "Grim" Fairy Tales: this time a horrific version of Hansel and Gretel. A dark brooding, beautifully drawn Jack Davis swamp tale and a werewolf story are also featured.

☐ **A complete set of all ten classics, while all are still available: \$50.00**

**TERMS:** Please add 50¢ per comic ordered to help defray postage and handling. List each comic ordered by number or indicate complete set. Each comic will be shipped individually bagged and securely wrapped. Make checks or money orders payable to **Bruce Hamilton, Inc.**, and mail to:

**Rare E.C. Offer • Bruce Hamilton • P.O. Box 4235 • Prescott, AZ 86302**



# THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!



ONCE UPON A TIME, LONG, LONG AGO, IN A KINGDOM FAR, FAR AWAY, THERE WAS A CASTLE! AND IN THIS CASTLE DWELT A KING... A QUEEN... AND A YOUNG DASHING PRINCE...

PRINCE JUNIOR! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO DASH THROUGH THE HALLS LIKE THAT!

SOB... I FELL ON MY ROYAL... SOB...

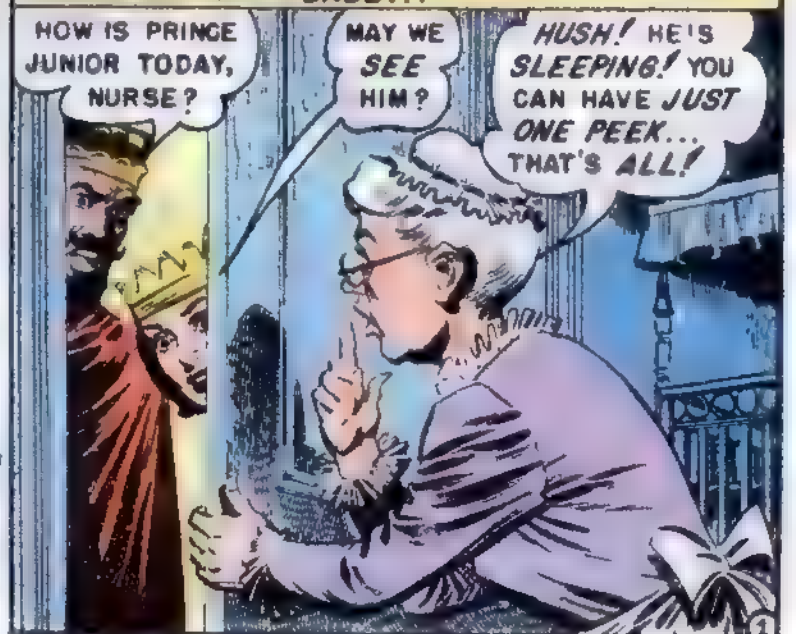


NOW THE KING AND QUEEN OF THIS FAR, FAR AWAY KINGDOM WERE VERY BUSY... KINGING AND QUEENING! THEY'D HAD NO TIME TO TAKE CARE OF YOUNG PRINCE JUNIOR! SO... THEY'D HIRED A NURSE WHEN JUNIOR WAS JUST A BABE...

HOW IS PRINCE JUNIOR TODAY, NURSE?

MAY WE SEE HIM?

HUSH! HE'S SLEEPING! YOU CAN HAVE JUST ONE PEEK... THAT'S ALL!





NATURALLY, AS PRINCE JUNIOR GREW, HE BECAME MORE AND MORE ATTACHED TO HIS OLD NURSE...

PRINCE JUNIOR! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? OH, DEAR...

GIGGLE... GIGGLE! I TIED YOU AROUND MY STWINGS TO ME BEWLT! WE IS ATTACHED!



EVERY DAY, NURSE FANNY (FOR THAT WAS HER NAME!) WOULD DRESS PRINCE JUNIOR...

THERE! YOU LOOK VERY NICE! NOW DON'T GET DIRTY! YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER ARE COMING TO SEE YOU SOON!

YETH, NURTH FANNY!



...WOULD SCOLD HIM WHEN HE WAS NAUGHTY...

I TOLD YOU NOT TO GET DIRTY... YOU BAD, BAD BOY!

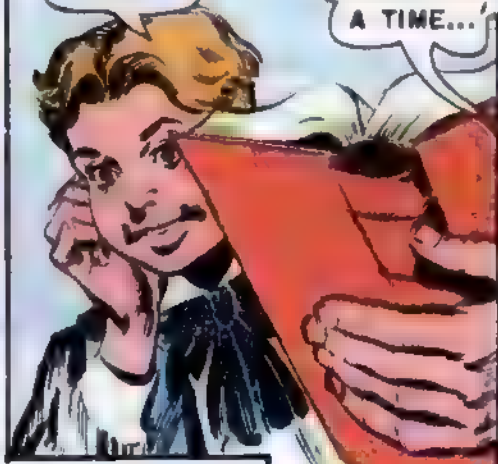
THO, HOW DID I KNOW THEY PUNLED UP THE DRAW-BWIDGE?



...WOULD READ TO HIM WHEN HE WAS GOOD...

WEAD TO ME ABOUT THE WICKED WITCH WHAT COOKS THE BAD WITTLE PEASANT CHILDWEN IN HER OVEN, NURTH, FANNY!

ALL RIGHT, PRINCE JUNIOR! LET'S SEE! AH! HERE! 'ONCE UPON A TIME...



...WOULD TUCK HIM IN AT NIGHT!

GOOD NIGHT, PRINCE JUNIOR!

JUST ONE MORE STOWY, NURTH FANNY! THE ONE ABOUT THE WICKED WITCH WHAT COOKS THE BAD WITTLE PEASANT CHILDWEN!



NURSE FANNY WAS MORE OF A MOTHER TO PRINCE JUNIOR THAN THE QUEEN...

I WOY YOU, NURTH FANNY!

AND I LOVE YOU, LITTLE PRINCE!

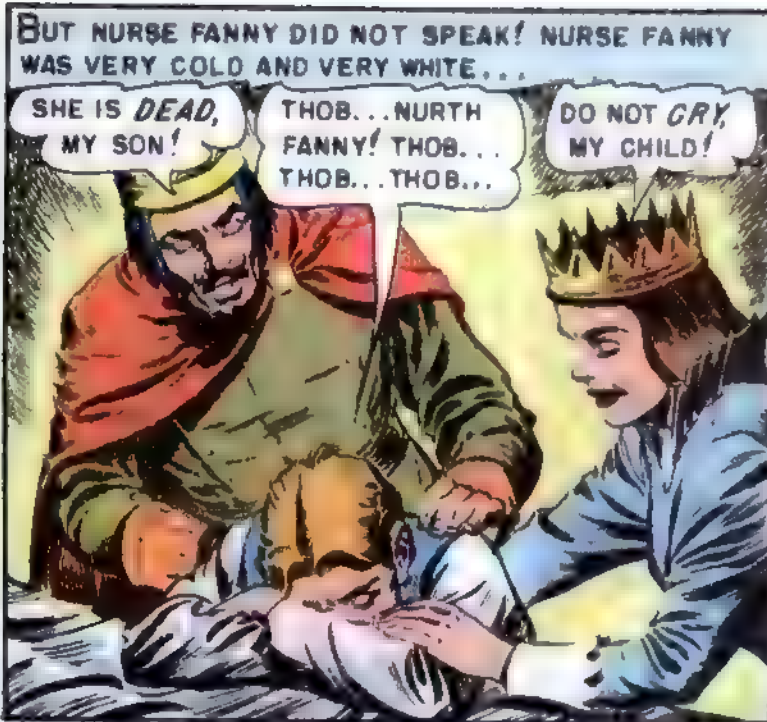


AND SO, WHEN PRINCE JUNIOR WOKE UP ONE MORNING AND FOUND NURSE FANNY LYING VERY STILL...

NURTH FANNY! NURTH FANNY! THEPEAK TO ME!





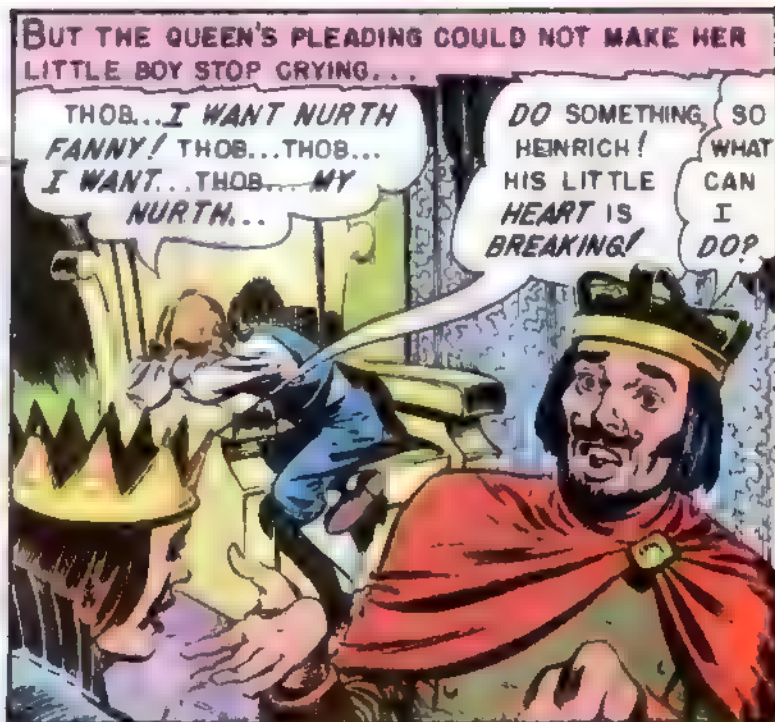


BUT NURSE FANNY DID NOT SPEAK! NURSE FANNY WAS VERY COLD AND VERY WHITE...

SHE IS DEAD, MY SON!

THOB...NURTH FANNY! THOB... THOB...THOB...

DO NOT CRY, MY CHILD!



BUT THE QUEEN'S PLEADING COULD NOT MAKE HER LITTLE BOY STOP CRYING...

THOB...I WANT NURTH FANNY! THOB...THOB... I WANT...THOB...MY NURTH...

DO SOMETHING, SO HEINRICH! HIS LITTLE HEART IS BREAKING! WHAT CAN I DO?



MAKE SOMETHING UP! PROMISE HIM SOMETHING! ANYTHING!

PRINCE JUNIOR! YOU SHOULDN'T CRY! THINK OF ALL THE CANDY!

THOB. I WANT THOB... THOB...

CANDY!? WHAT CANDY?

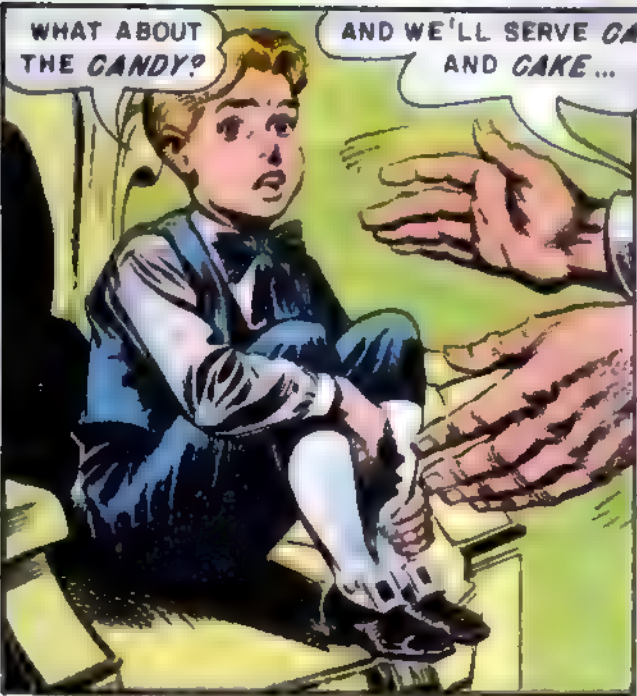


AT THE FUNERAL!



FUNERAL? WHAT...THOB... IS THAT?

WHEN SOMEONE DIES, MY SON, THEY MAKE A FUNERAL! WE'LL HAVE A FUNERAL FOR FANNY! WE'LL INVITE ALL YOUR COUSINS...



WHAT ABOUT THE CANDY?

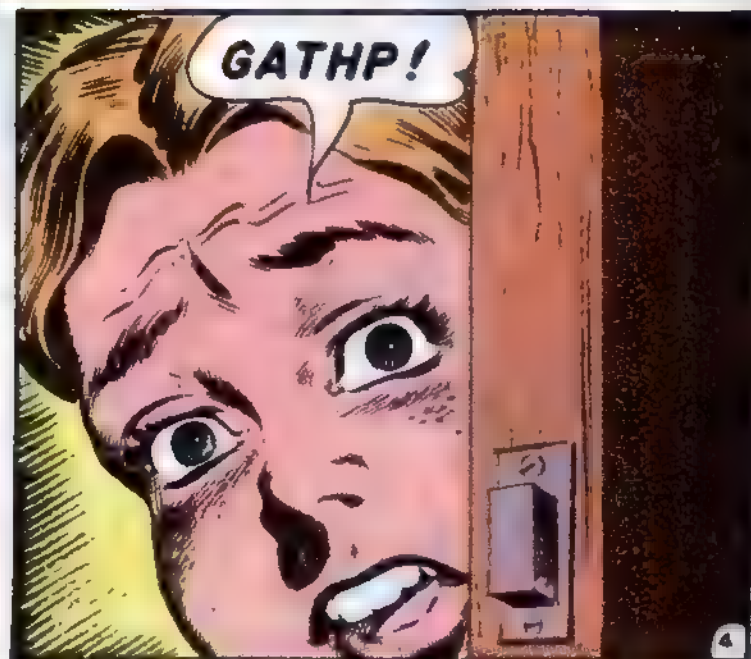
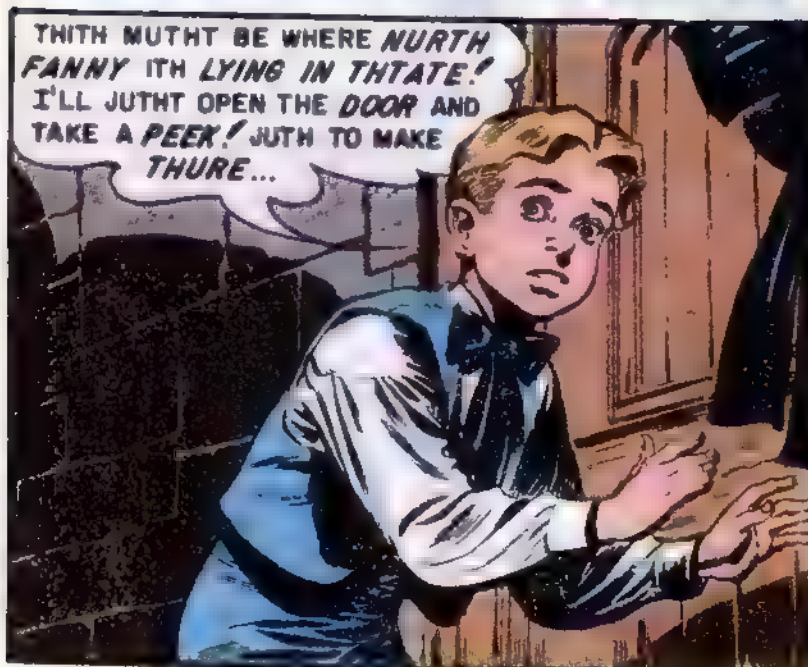
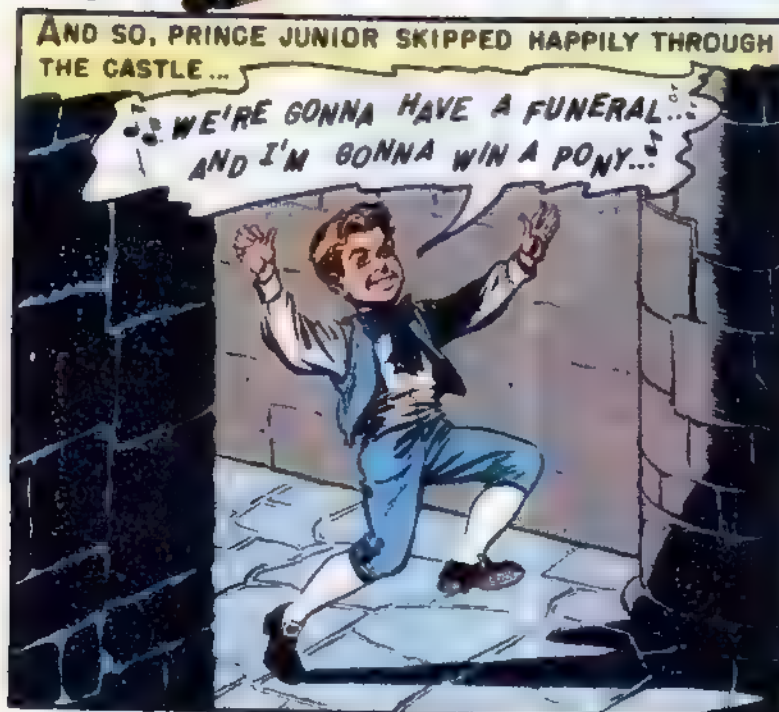
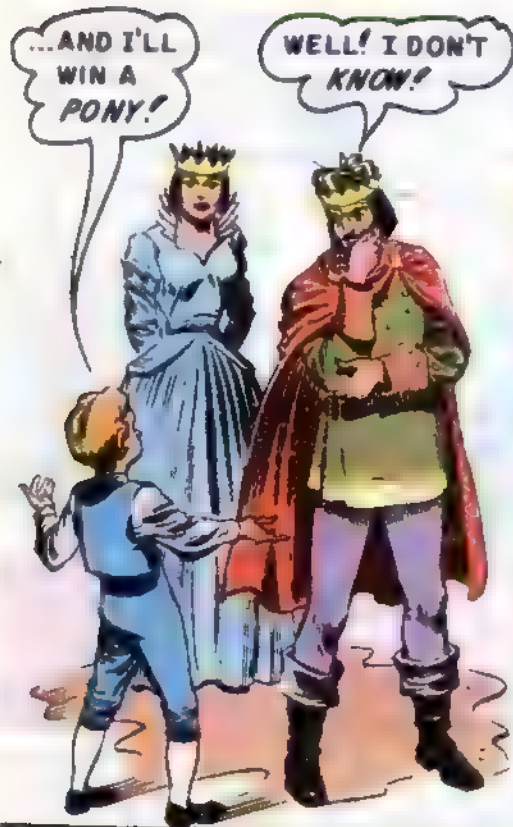
AND WE'LL SERVE CANDY AND CAKE...



WIF WHIPPED CREAM?

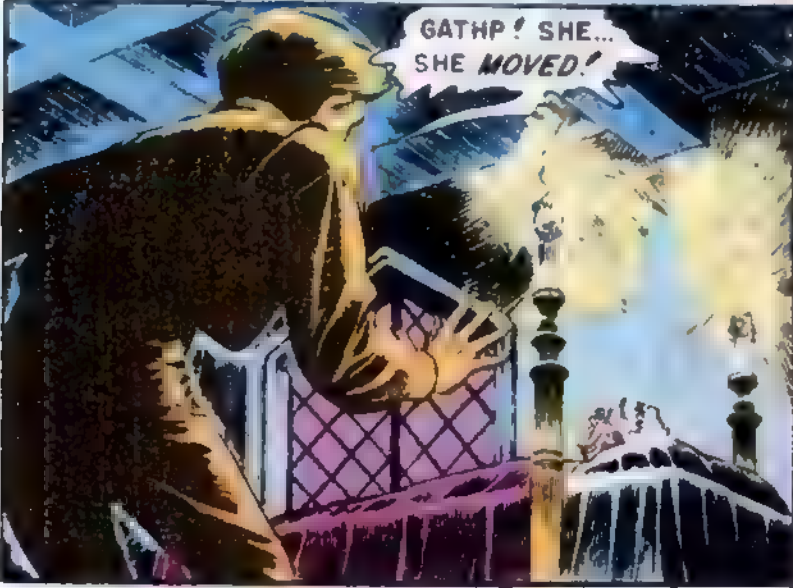
WITH WHIPPED CREAM! AND WE'LL PLAY GAMES AND GIVE PRIZES...







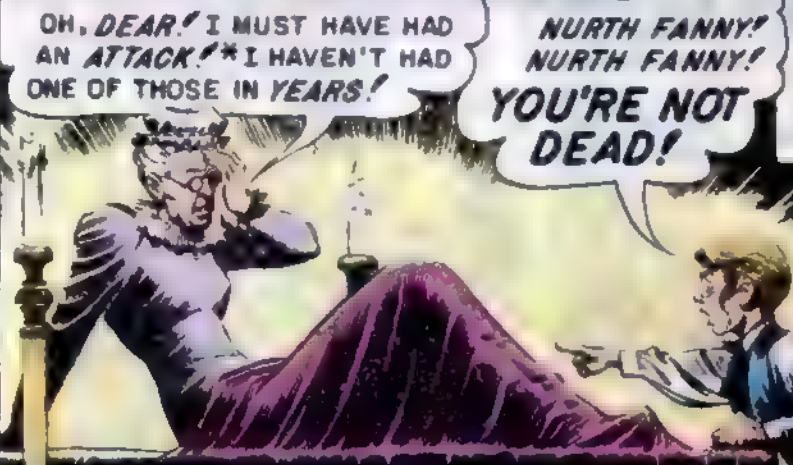
NURSE FANNY WAS STRETCHED OUT ON A VELVET-DRAPED BIER! AT HER HEAD, TWO CANDLES BURNED! THE ROOM WAS DARK, SAVE FOR THE GLOW FROM THE TWO FLICKERING FLAMES! BUT THERE WAS ENOUGH LIGHT FOR PRINCE JUNIOR TO SEE...



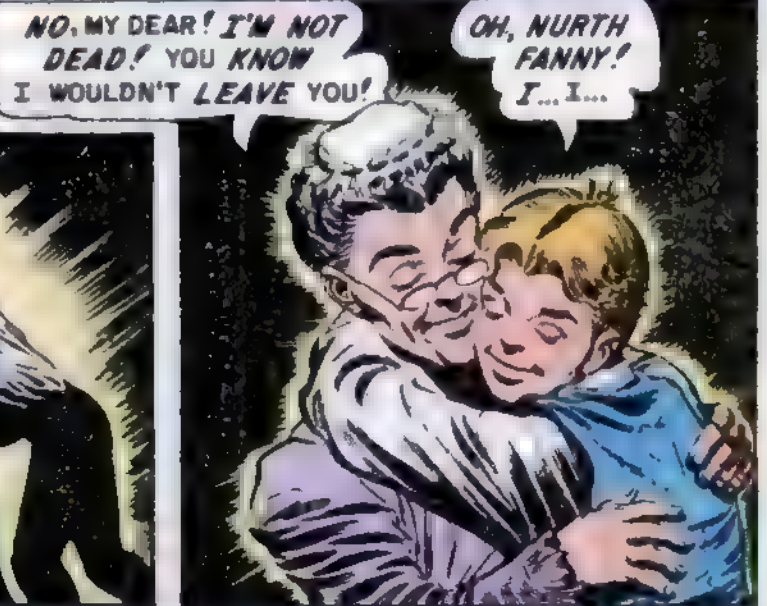
SUDDENLY, THE ROOM WAS FILLED WITH AN EERIE MOAN...



NURSE FANNY SAT UP, SHAKING HER HEAD...



PRINCE JUNIOR RAN INTO NURSE FANNY'S OUT-STRETCHED ARMS AND SHE HUGGED HIM TENDERLY...

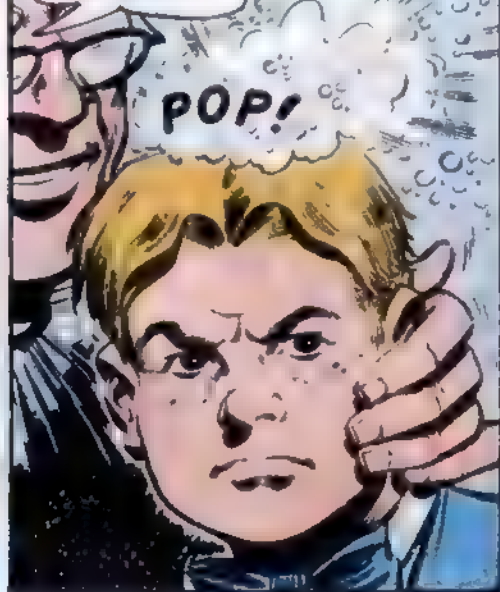


\* FANNY, YOU SEE, SUFFERED OCCASIONAL CATALEPTIC FITS WHICH MADE HER APPEAR DEAD! AND AFTER ALL, HOW GOOD WERE DOCTORS IN THOSE DAYS, ANYHOW?

SUDDENLY PRINCE CHARMING THOUGHT ABOUT ALL HIS COUSINS...



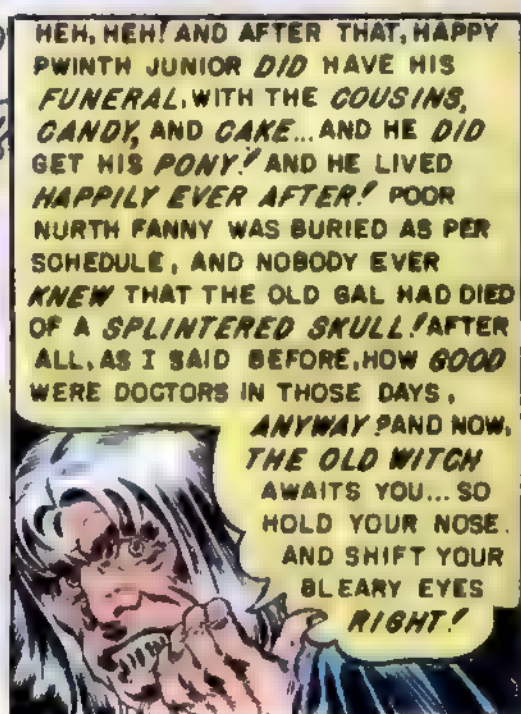
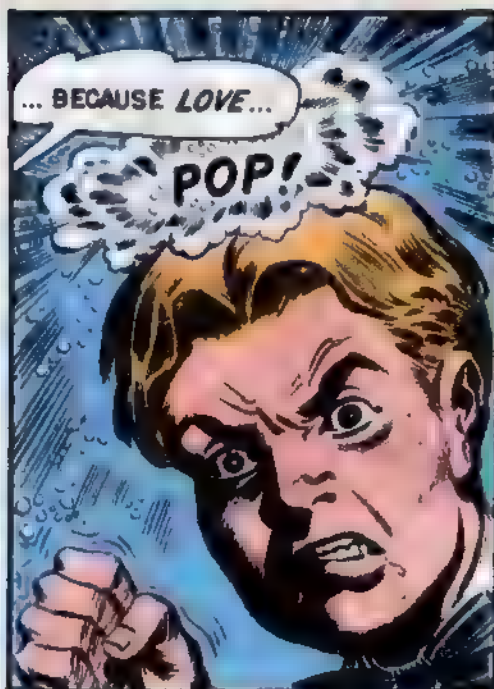
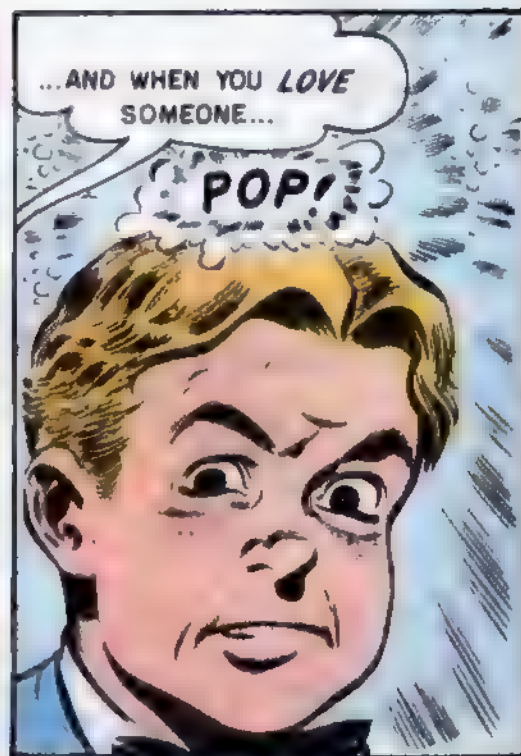
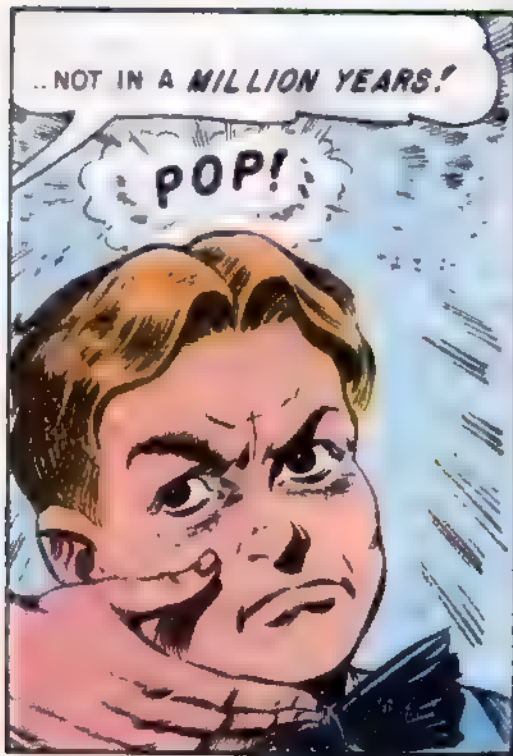
... BECAUSE YOU'RE MY BABY...



AND THEN HE THOUGHT ABOUT ALL THE CANDY...





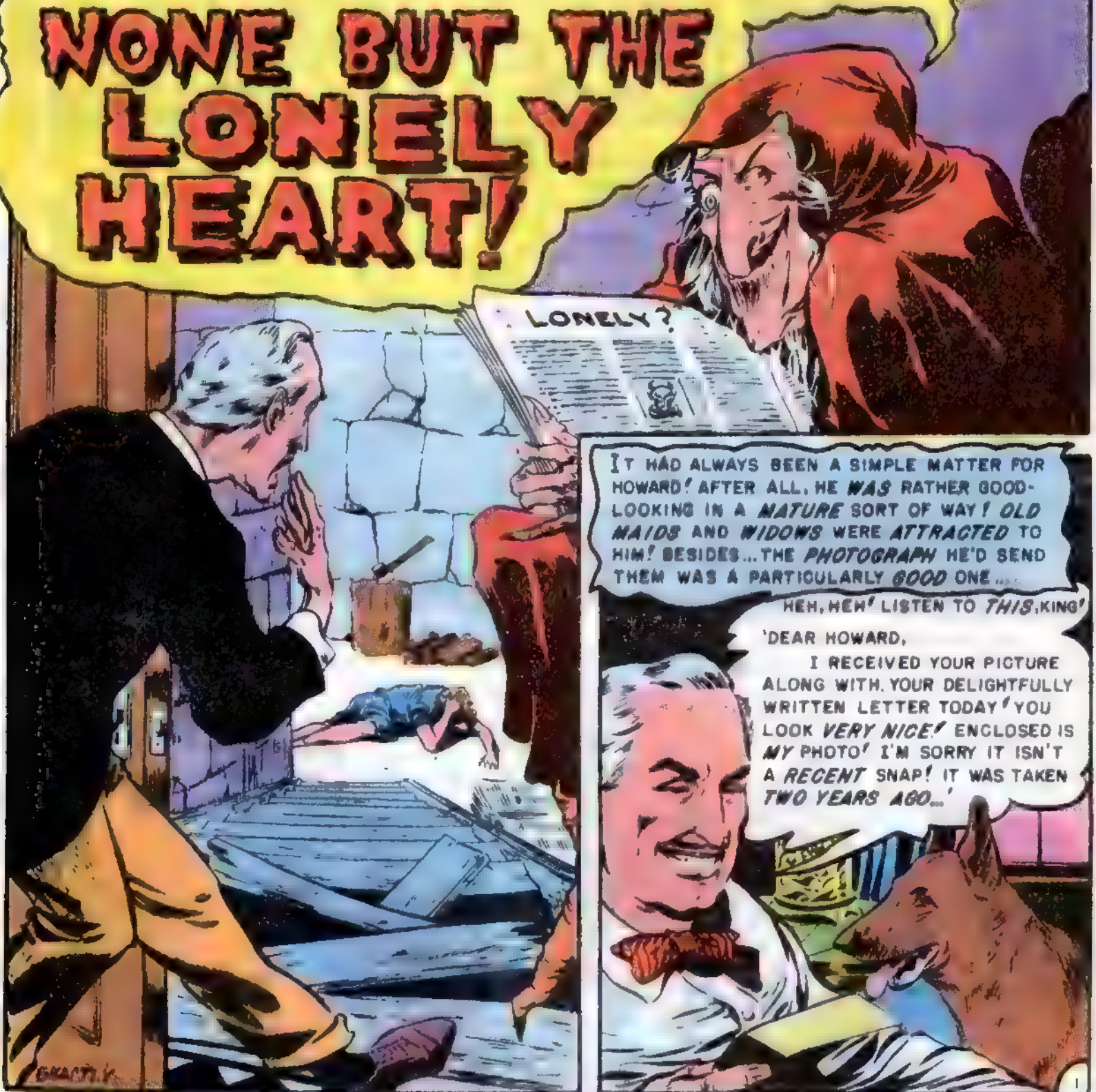




# THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

WELL...HEE,HEE...IT'S ME...YOUR HOSTESS IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR,THE OLD WITCH,READY TO RUSTLE UP ANOTHER REVOLTING RECIPE IN MY CRUDDY CAULDRON! SO,CRAWL IN,CREEPS! KNOT YOUR DRIBBLE NAPKINS AROUND YOUR SCRAWNY NECKS...FASTEN YOUR DROOL CUPS...AND I'LL DISH OUT THE TALE OF TERROR I CALL...

## NONE BUT THE LONELY HEART!



IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN A SIMPLE MATTER FOR HOWARD! AFTER ALL, HE WAS RATHER GOOD-LOOKING IN A MATURE SORT OF WAY! OLD MAIDS AND WIDOWS WERE ATTRACTED TO HIM! BESIDES...THE PHOTOGRAPH HE'D SEND THEM WAS A PARTICULARLY GOOD ONE...

HEH,HEH! LISTEN TO THIS,KING!

'DEAR HOWARD,

I RECEIVED YOUR PICTURE ALONG WITH YOUR DELIGHTFULLY WRITTEN LETTER TODAY! YOU LOOK VERY NICE! ENCLOSED IS MY PHOTO! I'M SORRY IT ISN'T A RECENT SNAP! IT WAS TAKEN TWO YEARS AGO...'



HOWARD PATTED HIS DOG'S HEAD AND SMILED...



WELL! SHE'S SENT US HER *PICTURE*, BOY! SHALL WE *BRACE OURSELVES* AND TAKE A *LOOK*?

HE LIFTED THE PICTURE FROM THE ENVELOPE AND GASPED...



WHY... SHE... SHE'S *BEAUTIFUL*, KING!

INDEED, HOWARD'S LATEST PROPOSED VICTIM *WAS* BEAUTIFUL! HOWARD STUDIED HER FOR A MOMENT, THOUGHTFULLY...



YOU *KNOW*, KING! WITH A WOMAN LIKE *THIS*, I MIGHT DECIDE TO *WIND UP THIS RACKET* AND *SETTLE DOWN FOR GOOD*!

HOWARD SAT BACK, THE PICTURE IN HIS LAP, AND LIT HIS PIPE! THE SMOKE CURLED UP LAZILY, THINKING AS IT DRIFTED TOWARD THE CEILING...



REMEMBER THE *FIRST* PICTURE WE EVER GOT, KING? LET'S SEE! ALMOST *SEVEN YEARS* AGO IT WAS! WHAT *WAS* HER NAME? OH, YES! *MATILDA! MATILDA FILBY!*

'WE GOT HER NAME FROM A *LONELY-HEARTS CLUB LIST*! REMEMBER? THAT WAS BACK WHEN I FIRST DECIDED TO START THIS LITTLE 'LOVE-FOR-MONEY' GAME! AFTER A COUPLE OF WARM LETTERS CROSSED, IT CAME...

*WHEW!* WHAT A *FACE!* LOOK AT *THIS*, KING! HOW COULD I EVER LOVE AN *UGLY WENCH* LIKE *THIS*...



'BUT SHE HAD *MONEY*, DIDN'T SHE, KING? REMEMBER? SHE WROTE, DESCRIBING HER HOUSE... THE FURNISHINGS...

SHE'S *RICH* THOUGH, KING! SHE'S GOT *LOOT!* AND SHE LIVES *ALONE!* MAYBE... *CHOKES*... MAYBE LOOKS *AREN'T EVERYTHING!*



'SO WE TOOK THE *PLUNGE*, EH, BOY? WE WROTE PASSIONATE TONES OF LOVE, AND FINALLY *PROPOSED!* AND SHE *ACCEPTED!* SO WE PAWNED MY WATCH, BOUGHT A NEW SUIT OF CLOTHES... AND A TICKET... AND *WENT!*

HOWARD... *DEAR ONE!*

*MATILDA!* MY PET!





'HOW LONG WAS IT AFTER OUR WEDDING, KING? SIX MONTHS? NOT MUCH MORE! POOR MATILDA! SHE NEVER EVEN KNEW WE'D LOOSENEED THE TOP CELLAR STAIR...'

EEEEEEAAAHHH! MATILDA! WHAT IS IT?

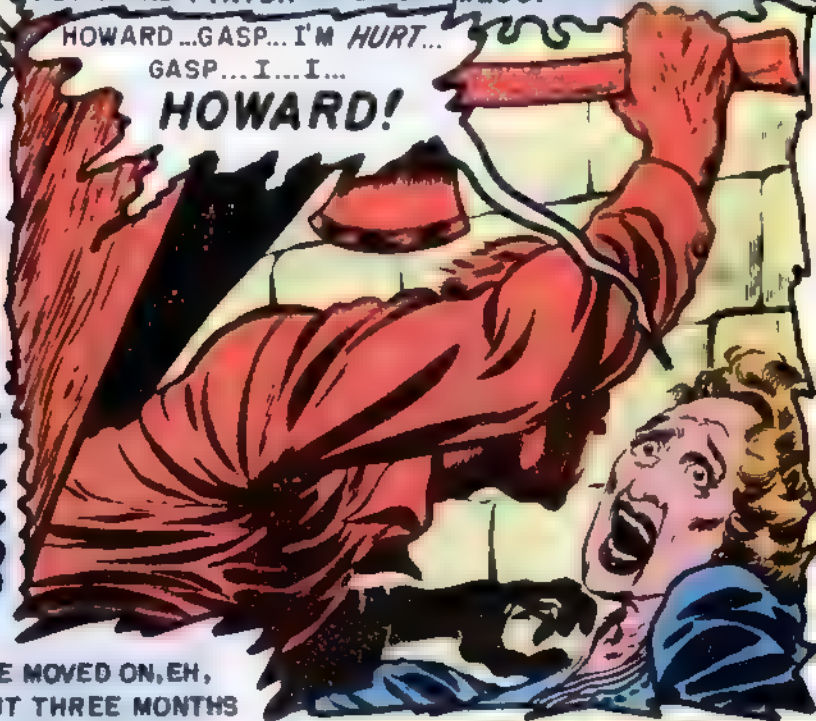


'THE FALL DIDN'T KILL HER, DID IT? WE HAD TO GO DOWN AND FINISH THE JOB! MESSY BUSINESS...'

HOWARD...GASP...I'M HURT...

GASP...I...I...

HOWARD!



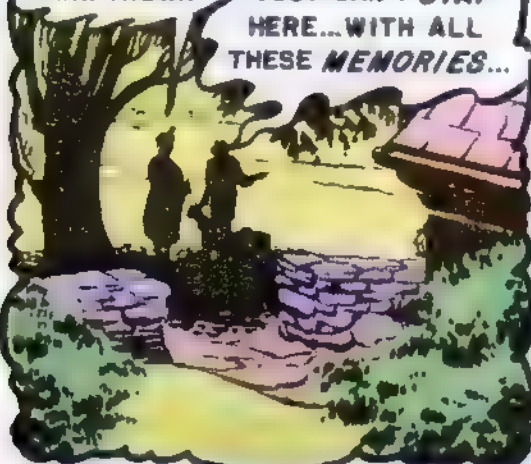
'HOW MUCH DID WE MAKE ON THAT DEAL, KING? LET'S SEE! WE SOLD THE HOUSE FOR TEN THOUSAND... AND...OH, YES! ALL TOLD, ABOUT SIXTY GRAND...'

'HEH, HEH! SO WE MOVED ON, EH, KING? AND ABOUT THREE MONTHS LATER, WE CONTACTED OUR SECOND VICTIM! SHE'D ADVERTIZED IN A PERSONAL COLUMN, HADN'T SHE? YEP...IT BEGAN AGAIN...'

'TOOK US SIX MONTHS OF ARDENT LOVE-MAKING VIA THE U.S. MAIL TO CONVINCE THAT ONE, HUH, KING! WHAT WAS HER NAME? OH...YES...'

YOU'RE... LEAVING US, MR. CROWN?

WHY...YES, MRS. SENTINE! I...I JUST CAN'T STAY HERE...WITH ALL THESE MEMORIES...



WELL, AT LEAST SHE'S BETTER THAN THE LAST ONE, EH, KING? LORD, AREN'T THERE ANY PRETTY RICH WIDOWS?



HOWARD! SWEET...

EPHIE... MY DEAR...

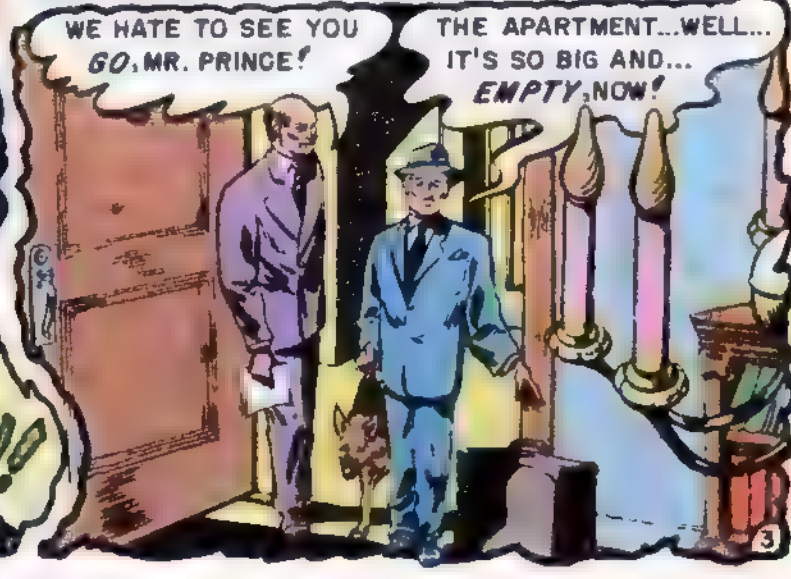


'WE DIDN'T WASTE MUCH TIME WITH HER, EH, KING? SHE WASN'T AS WEALTHY AS WE THOUGHT! SOMETIMES IT'S HARD TO TELL, ISN'T IT? AND YOU CAN'T VERY WELL ASK! HOW LONG DID EPHIE LAST BEFORE SHE FELL FROM HER APARTMENT WINDOW?..'

'THE FRESH-AIR-FIEND! HEH, HEH! IT WAS SO EASY TO PUSH HER! SHE HAD JEWELRY, THOUGH! HOW MUCH DID WE GET? FIVE GRAND OR SO, WASN'T IT?'

WE HATE TO SEE YOU GO, MR. PRINCE!

THE APARTMENT...WELL... IT'S SO BIG AND... EMPTY, NOW!





'NUMBER THREE ANSWERED OUR AD, EH, KING? SHE WAS THE WORST OF THE LOT! TWO HUNDRED POUNDS, AT LEAST! BUT SHE HAD THAT REAL ESTATE... OUT IN OKLAHOMA! SO...'

HOWARD! DEAREST!

LUELLA, MY LOVE! CHOKES...

'THAT JOB WAS THE *CLEVEREST*. THOUGH, I MUST ADMIT! REMEMBER? I MADE SURE TO LEAVE YOU HOME THAT DAY WE WENT DRIVING ...'

BE CAREFUL, HOWARD! THERE'S A SHARP DROP ON THIS TURN! YOU... YOU HOWARD! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

GOOD-BYE, LUELLA!

'I LEAPED FROM THE CAR JUST AS IT WENT OVER THE CLIFF! OH, YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE, KING! YOU'D HAVE BEEN PROUD OF ME! AND WHAT A SIGHT! THE CAR... GOING OVER AND OVER... DOWN... DOWN ...'

'THAT REAL ESTATE BROUGHT US *SEVENTY GRAND* HUH, KING! YES! BUT THAT WAS A MISTAKE! SELLING IT! LATER, THEY FOUND OIL THERE! OF ALL THE LUCK! OH, WELL! WE MADE UP FOR IT ON NUMBER FOUR! REMEMBER HER?...?'

HOWARD! MY DREAM...

VERONICA! YOU LOOK EVEN LOVELIER THAN YOUR PICTURE... GAG...

'THE FACTORY THAT VERONICA'S FIRST HUSBAND HAD LEFT HER WAS WORTH A SMALL FORTUNE! *CHEMICALS*! IT SPELLED HER OWN UNDOING, EH, KING? REMEMBER HOW I LEARNED ABOUT THAT *NON-TRACEABLE POISON*...?'

HOWARD! THAT COFFEE! I... I... GASP...

YES, VERONICA? WHAT ABOUT IT?

'POOR VERONICA! THE POISON MADE HER GO INTO SUCH PAINFUL CONVULSIONS BEFORE SHE DIED! BUT A HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS WASN'T HAY, WAS IT, KING?'

YOU'RE SURE YOU WANT TO SELL, MR. ROYAL? AFTER ALL...

YES, MR. BIBBS! I'D RATHER! I... I COULDN'T GO ON WITHOUT... HER!

'HEH, HEH! HOW MANY WERE THERE ALL TOGETHER, KING? SEVEN? YES! SEVEN! WHY... WE COULD HAVE RETIRED EASILY WITH THE FORTUNE WE'D MADE FROM THEM! BUT THEN WE READ THIS ONE'S... JANET'S AD...'

HMMM! LISTEN TO THIS, KING! 'LONELY WOMAN DESIRES CORRESPONDENCE WITH REFINED GENTLEMAN!'



'WE COULDN'T *RESIST*, COULD WE, KING? WE *HAD* TO WRITE! AND THEN HER ANSWER CAME...

'DEAR MR. THRONE, YOUR LETTER ARRIVED TODAY, AND I READ IT WITH MUCH INTEREST! YOU SOUND VERY CULTURED AND WELL TRAVELED! I WOULD ENJOY CORRESPONDING WITH YOU! JANET LANE

HOWARD PUT HIS PIPE DOWN AND SMILED! HE SHUFFLED THROUGH A SHEAF OF PAPERS...

SO WE STARTED WRITING, EH, KING! LET'S SEE! HERE'S HER *SECOND* LETTER...

'DEAR HOWARD... IF I MAY BE SO SO *BOLD*,

I RESIDE IN A STURDILY BUILT STONE HOUSE. THE PROPERTY IS VERY LARGE.. ALMOST TWELVE ACRES.. AND VERY WELL KEPT! BUT FOR A WOMAN SUCH AS MYSELF, BEING ALONE AS I AM... WITHOUT ANYONE LIVING FOR MILES AROUND... LIFE CAN BE VERY HARD YOUR LETTERS ARE A GREAT COMFORT

CAN'T YOU *SEE* HER, KING? THIS *RAVISHING WOMAN* LIVING ALONE ON THIS *PALATIAL ESTATE* IN A *HUGE FIELDSTONE HOUSE*! WHY IT SOUNDS ALMOST *TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE*...

LISTEN TO *THIS* LETTER! 'MARBLE FLOORS...' *SAY!* 'FURNISHED IN EXQUISITE TASTE'... 'HARD WOODS'... 'BRONZE TRIMS'... 'SATIN DRAPERIES'... 'STAINED GLASS WINDOWS'...

KING, M'BOY! I THINK IT'S TIME THAT YOU AND I WERE *SETTLING DOWN!* WE'RE NOT GETTING ANY *YOUNGER*, YOU KNOW! AND IF JANET...

HOWARD PICKED UP THE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE LOVELY WOMAN... ...IF JANET LOOKS LIKE *THIS*,

I THINK WE'VE FOUND THE *RIGHT ONE*, THIS TIME! WHY, YOU'LL HAVE THAT *BIG ESTATE* TO ROMP AROUND IN... WITH THE *HAND-WROUGHT-IRON GATES!* AND THE *GARDENERS...* AND *TREES...* *FLOWERS...* AND A *BIG STONE HOUSE*...



**HOWARD PICKED UP A PEN...**

I'M GOING TO *PROPOSE* TO HER, KING! SHE SPEAKS OF HOW *LONELY* SHE IS... AND SHE HAS MY *PICTURE*! MAYBE... MAYBE SHE'LL SAY 'YES'!

**THREE DAYS LATER, JANET'S ANSWER CAME...**

SHE'S *ACCEPTED*, KING! SHE'LL *MARRY* ME! OH, I WOULDN'T LET MYSELF *HOPE*... BUT NOW I'M SO *HAPPY*!

**HOWARD PACKED HIS BAGS...**

NO MORE *WANDERING* AROUND FOR US, BOY! NO MORE *ALIASES*... NO MORE *FALSE LOVE-MAKING*! WE'RE *SETTLING* DOWN... FOR *GOOD*...

**HOWARD SENT A TELEGRAM ON AHEAD ANNOUNCING HIS EXPECTED ARRIVAL DATE, AND HE AND KING SET OUT BY CAR FOR JANET'S HOME...**

ONLY *FIFTY MORE MILES*, BOY! WE'LL BE THERE BEFORE *MIDNIGHT*!

**HOWARD CHECKED JANET'S ADDRESS WITH A POLICEMAN IN THE TOWN...**

BAYBERRY ROAD? WHY IT'S STRAIGHT ON SOUTH ABOUT *TWO MILES*! YOU CAN'T MISS IT! WHAT NUMBER WAS THAT?

THAT'S ALL RIGHT OFFICER! I'LL FIND IT! THANKS!

**BAYBERRY ROAD WAS A LONG NARROW TREE-LINED LANE OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY! THERE WERE FEW HOUSES ALONG IT! FINALLY...**

THERE'S THE *WROUGHT-IRON GATE*, KING! WE'RE *HERE*!

**AS HOWARD'S CAR SWUNG IN AT THE GATE, HIS HEADLIGHTS FELL ACROSS...**

WHAT THE..?



THE LETTERS WERE RUSTED AND OLD, BUT *VERY CLEAR*...

**A CEMETERY!**



KING BEGAN TO WHINE SOFTLY...

*STEADY, BOY! STEADY!*  
WE MUST HAVE MADE  
A MISTAKE...



SUDDENLY, THE CAR DOOR SWUNG OPEN! KING YELPED...

*YI-YI-YI-YI!*  
**GOOD LORD!**



THE ROTTED, DECAYED THING GRINNED...REACHING OUT-  
WARD! ITS FLESH CRAWLED WITH THE SLIME OF DEATH!  
ITS VOICE RASPED LIKE A WORN OUT GRAMAPHONE  
CYLINDER...

HOWARD... DA-A-ARLING!

JANET! GASP!

**NO!  
NO!**



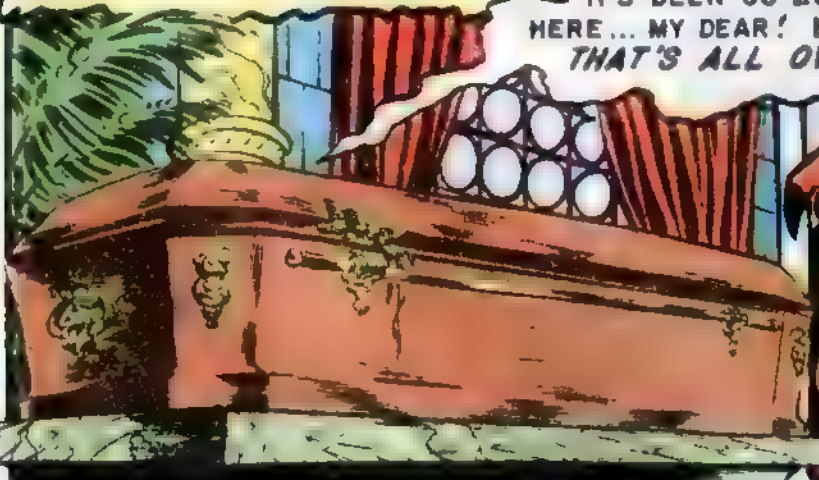
KING LEAPED FROM THE CAR, HOWLING! THE  
THING CLOSED ITS FLESH-TATTERED BONEY FIN-  
GERS AROUND HOWARD'S WRIST IN A VICE-LIKE  
GRIP AND DRAGGED HIM FROM THE CAR TOWARD  
THE OPEN MAUSOLEUM...

I'M SORRY I DIDN'T HAVE A  
MORE RECENT SNAPSHOT, MY  
DEAR! AREN'T THE GROUNDS  
JUST AS I DESCRIBED THEM?



THE FEMALE-THING DRAGGED THE SCREAMING MAN INTO THE SATIN  
DRAPED MAUSOLEUM WITH THE STAINED GLASS WINDOW... ACROSS  
THE MARBLE FLOOR AND INTO THE HARD-WOOD, BRONZE-TRIMMED  
COFFIN! AND ALL THE WHILE, AS IT CLOSED THE LID DOWN, IT  
KEPT MURMURING... SPEWING ITS FOUL-SMELLING BREATH  
UPON HIS TERROR-STRICKEN FACE...

IT'S BEEN SO LONELY  
HERE... MY DEAR! BUT NOW...  
**THAT'S ALL OVER!**



HEE, HEE! WHAT A LOVE AFFAIR,  
EH, KIDDIES? 'ALL OVER, NOW' IS  
RIGHT... FOR HOWIE, THAT IS! OH,  
BY THE WAY! IN CASE YOU'RE WON-  
DERING WHAT HAPPENED TO KING,  
REST YOUR FIENDISH MINDS!  
JANET HAD A DOG... NAMED  
QUEENIE! AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO  
CLOSE THAT PUTRID CRYPT-  
KEEPER'S MAG! WE'LL ALL SEE

YOU NEXT IN THE  
VAULT-KEEPER'S  
MESS, THE VAULT  
OF HORROR! 'BYE,  
NOW! AND IF YOU  
GET ANY LOVE  
LETTERS SIGNED  
'JANET' OR 'HOWIE'  
... HEE, HEE... WELL...

THE END



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# CRIME

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AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!





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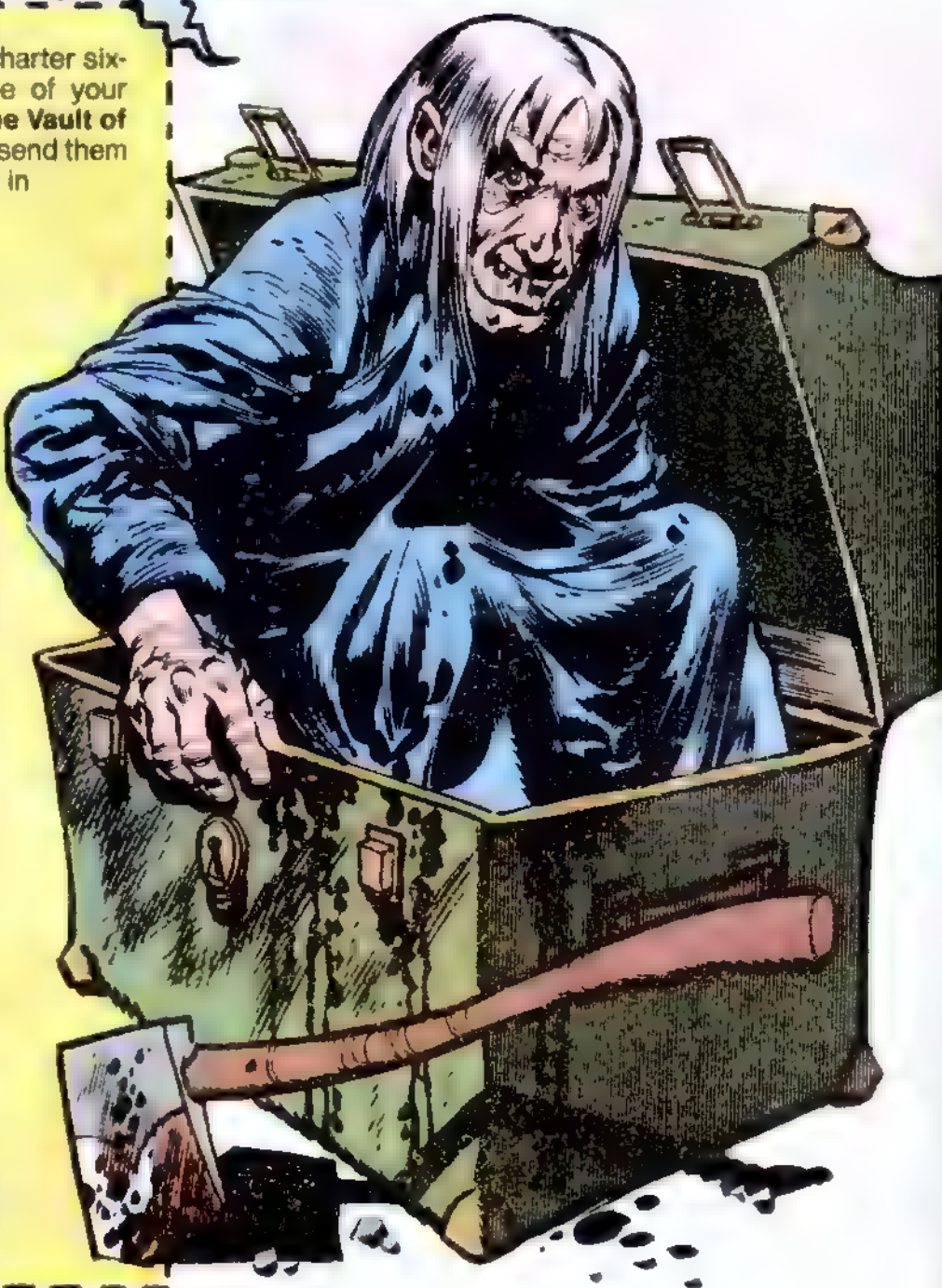
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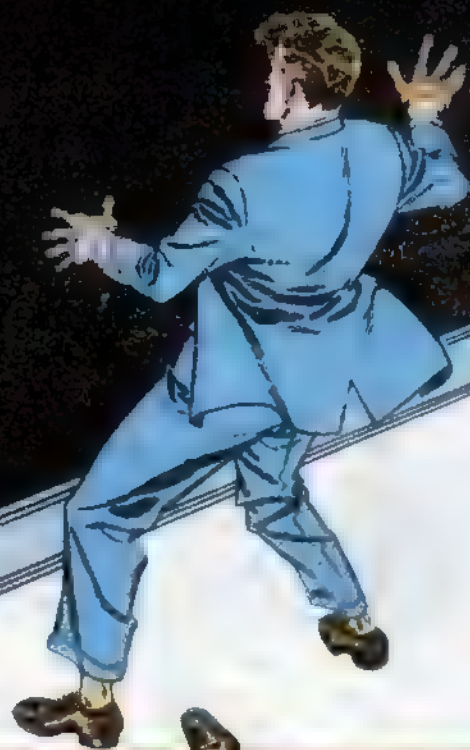
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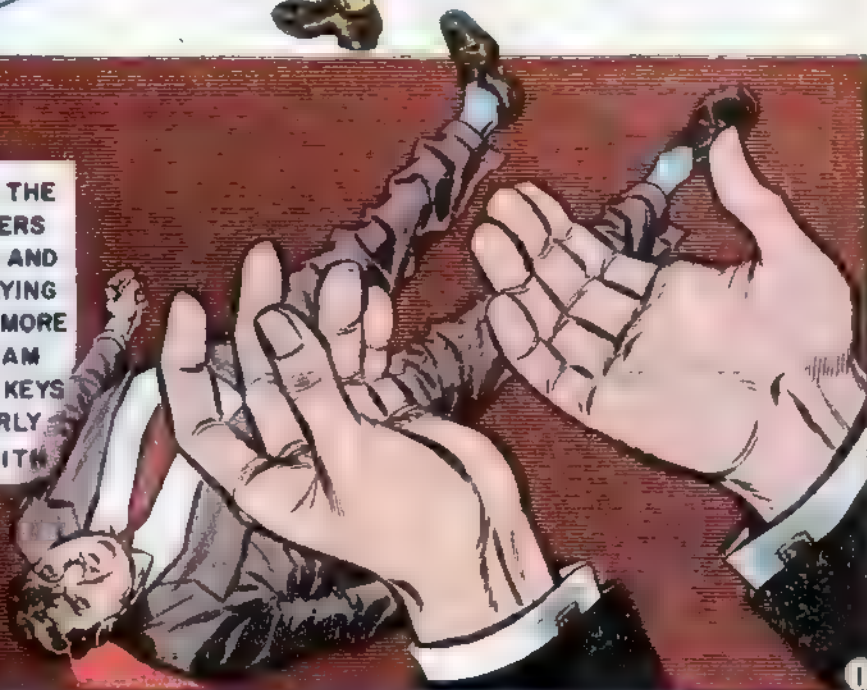




# TOUCH *and* GO!



WILLIAM ACTON ROSE TO HIS FEET. THE CLOCK ON THE MANTEL TICKED MIDNIGHT. HE LOOKED AT HIS FINGERS AND HE LOOKED AT THE LARGE ROOM AROUND HIM AND HE LOOKED AT THE MAN NAMED ARTHUR HUXLEY LYING ON THE FLOOR WHO WAS DEAD AND WOULD SAY NO MORE SAYINGS NOR BRUTALIZE MORE BRUTALITIES. WILLIAM ACTON, WHOSE FINGERS HAD STROKED TYPEWRITER KEYS AND MADE LOVE AND FRIED HAM AND EGGS FOR EARLY BREAKFASTS, HAD NOW ACCOMPLISHED A MURDER WITH THOSE SAME TEN WHORLED FINGERS...

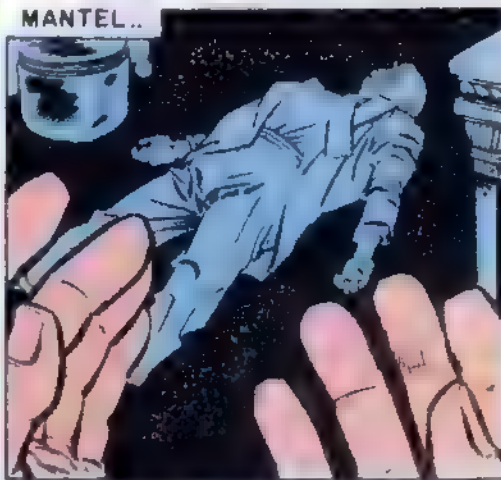




NOW WHAT? HIS EVERY IMPULSE EXPLODED HIM IN A HYSTERIA TOWARD THE DOOR. GET OUT, GET AWAY, RUN, NEVER COME BACK, BOARD A TRAIN, GET A TAXI, GET, GO, RUN, WALK, SAUNTER, BUT GET THE BLAZES OUT OF HERE...



HIS HANDS HOVERED BEFORE HIS EYES, FLOATING, TURNING. IT WAS NOT THE HANDS AS HANDS HE WAS INTERESTED IN, NOR THE FINGERS AS FINGERS. HE FOUND INTEREST ONLY IN THE *TIPS* OF HIS FINGERS. THE CLOCK TICKED UPON THE MANTEL...



HE KNELT BY HUXLEY'S BODY, TOOK A HANDKERCHIEF FROM HUXLEY'S POCKET AND BEGAN METHODICALLY TO SWAB HUXLEY'S THROAT WITH IT. HE BRUSHED AND MASSAGED THE FACE AND THE BACK OF THE NECK WITH A FIERCE ENERGY...



HE STOPPED. THERE WAS A MOMENT WHEN HE SAW THE ENTIRE HOUSE, THE HALLS, DOORS, FURNITURE; AND AS CLEARLY AS IF IT WERE BEING REPEATED WORD FOR WORD, HE HEARD HUXLEY TALKING AND HIMSELF TALKING JUST AS THEY HAD TALKED ONLY AN HOUR AGO...



HE HAD *TOUCHED* THE LIBRARY DOOR. HE HAD *TOUCHED* THE BOOKS AND THE LIBRARY TABLE AND *TOUCHED* THE BURGUNDY BOTTLE AND BURGUNDY GLASSES...



NOW, SQUATTING ON THE FLOOR BESIDE HUXLEY'S COLD BODY WITH THE POLISHING HANDKERCHIEF IN HIS FINGERS, HE STARED AT THE HOUSE, THE WALLS, THE FURNITURE, STUNNED BY WHAT HE REALIZED. HE SHUT HIS EYES, WADDING THE HANDKERCHIEF IN HIS HANDS, BITING HIS LIPS WITH HIS TEETH, PULLING IN ON HIMSELF! THE FINGERPRINTS WERE EVERYWHERE!



A PAIR OF GLOVES. BEFORE HE DID ONE MORE THING, BEFORE HE POLISHED ANOTHER AREA, HE MUST HAVE A PAIR OF GLOVES. HE PUT HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS, WALKED TO THE HALL UMBRELLA STAND, THE HATRACK, HUXLEY'S OVERCOAT. HE PULLED OUT THE OVERCOAT POCKETS NO GLOVES...





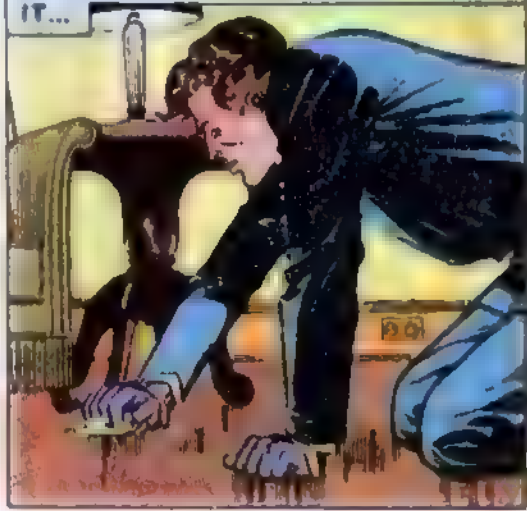
HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS AGAIN HE WALKED UPSTAIRS. HE UNTIED SEVENTY OR EIGHTY DRAWERS IN SIX UPSTAIRS ROOMS, LEFT THEM WITH TONGUES HANGING OUT. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE EIGHTY-FIFTH DRAWER HE FOUND GLOVES...



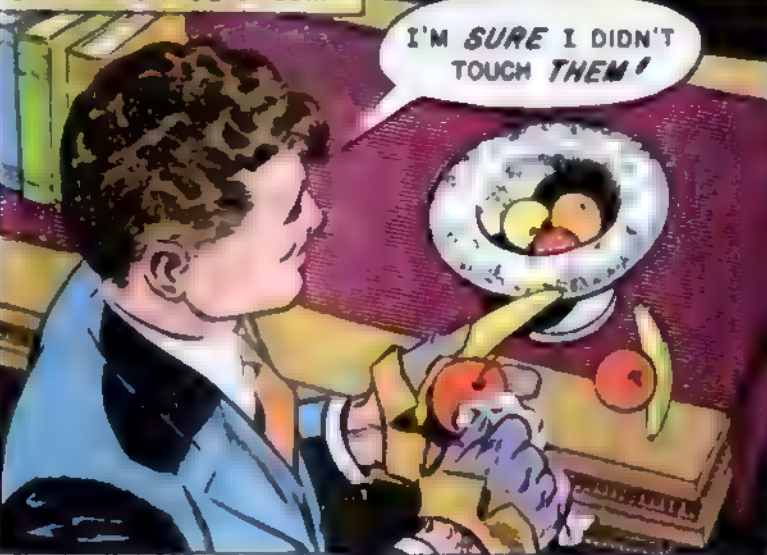
DOWN ONTO THE HARDWOOD FLOOR HAD DROPPED MR. HUXLEY, WITH WILLIAM ACTON AFTER HIM. THEY HAD ROLLED AND TUSSELED AND CLAWED AT THE FLOOR PRINTING IT WITH THEIR FINGERTIPS!



GLOVED, WILLIAM ACTON RETURNED TO THE ROOM AND LABORIOUSLY BEGAN SWABBING EVERY INFESTED INCH OF THE FLOOR. INCH BY INCH, HE POLISHED TILL HE COULD MOST SEE HIS INTENT SWEATING FACE IN IT...



THEN HE CAME TO A TABLE AND POLISHED THE LEG OF IT, ITS SOLID BODY, AND ON TOP, AND HE CAME TO A BOWL OF WAX FRUIT AND HE PLUCKED OUT THE WAX FRUIT AND POLISHED THEM, LEAVING THE FRUIT AT THE BOTTOM UNPOLISHED...



AFTER RUBBING THE TABLE, HE CAME TO A PICTURE FRAME OVER IT.



HE SHINED THE DOORKNOBS, CURRIED THE DOORS FROM HEAD TO FOOT. HE WENT TO ALL THE FURNITURE AND WIPED THE CHAIRS AND RUBBED THE FABRIC. FINGERPRINTS CAN BE FOUND ON FABRIC. HE WENT TO THE BODY, TURNED IT NOW THIS WAY, NOW THAT, AND BURNISHED EVERY SURFACE OF IT. HE EVEN SHINED THE SHOES, CHARGING NOTHING...

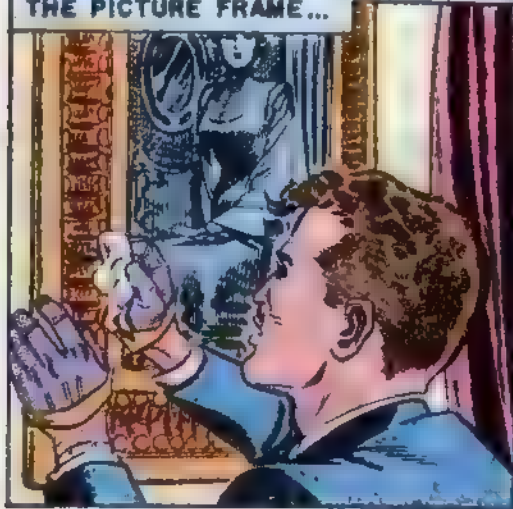


WHILE SHINING THE SHOES HIS FACE TOOK ON A LITTLE TREMOR OF WORRY, AND AFTER A MOMENT HE GOT UP AND WALKED OVER TO THAT TABLE. HE TOOK OUT AND POLISHED THE WAX FRUIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOWL...



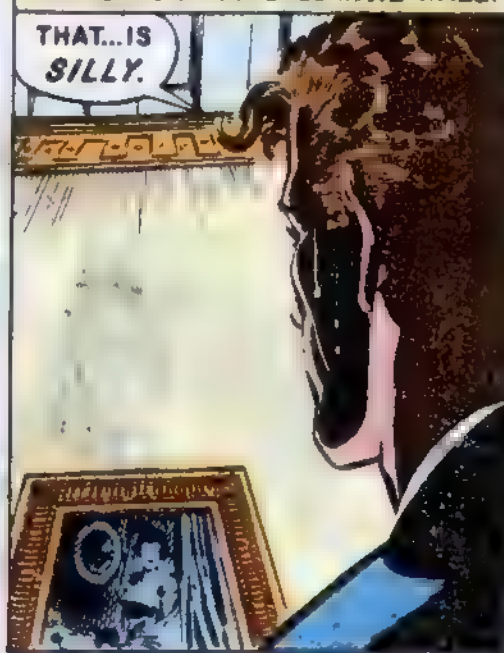


HE WENT BACK TO THE BODY. BUT AS HE CROUCHED OVER IT, HIS EYELIDS TWICKED AND HIS JAW MOVED FROM SIDE TO SIDE AND HE DEBATED. THEN HE GOT UP AND WALKED ONCE MORE TO THE TABLE. HE POLISHED THE PICTURE FRAME...



WHILE POLISHING THE PICTURE FRAME HE DISCOVERED...*THE WALL!*

THAT... IS SILLY.



HUXLEY HAD GIVEN HIM A SHOVE AS THEY STRUGGLED. HE HAD FALLEN AGAINST ONE WALL, GOTTEN UP, *TOUCHING THE WALL...*



HE GLANCED AT THE FOUR WALLS...

RIDICULOUS.



FROM THE CORNERS OF HIS EYES HE SAW SOMETHING ON ONE WALL...

I REFUSE TO PAY ATTENTION. THE NEXT ROOM, NOW. I'LL BE METHODICAL. LET'S SEE, WE WERE IN THE HALL, THE LIBRARY, *THIS* ROOM, THE DINING ROOM AND THE KITCHEN.



THERE WAS A SPOT ON THE WALL BEHIND HIM...



WELL, *WASN'T* THERE?



HE TURNED, ANGRILY, AND HE WENT OVER AND HE COULDN'T FIND ANY SPOT. OH, A *LITTLE* ONE, YES, RIGHT *THERE*. HE DABBED IT. IT WASN'T A FINGERPRINT ANYHOW!



HE LOOKED AT THE WALL AND THE WAY IT WENT OVER TO HIS RIGHT AND OVER TO HIS LEFT AND HOW IT WENT DOWN TO HIS FEET AND UP OVER HIS HEAD AND HE SAID SOFTLY...

NO.



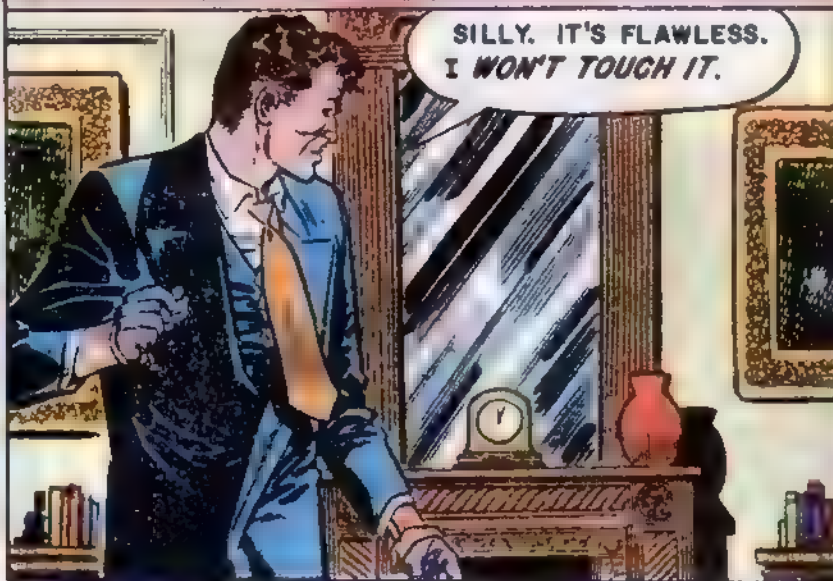
BUT UNKNOWN TO HIS EYES, HIS GLOVED FINGERS MOVED IN A LITTLE RUBBING RHYTHM ON THE WALL.



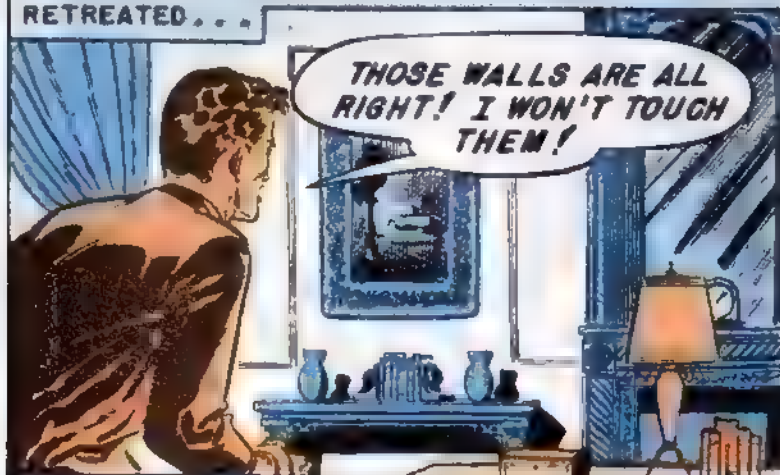
HE PEERED AT HIS HAND AND THE WALLPAPER. HE LOOKED OVER HIS SHOULDER AT THE OTHER ROOM. HIS FACE HARDENED. WITHOUT A WORD HE BEGAN TO SCRUB THE WALL, UP AND DOWN, BACK AND FORTH, UP AND DOWN, AS HIGH AS HE COULD STRETCH AND AS LOW AS HE COULD BEND...



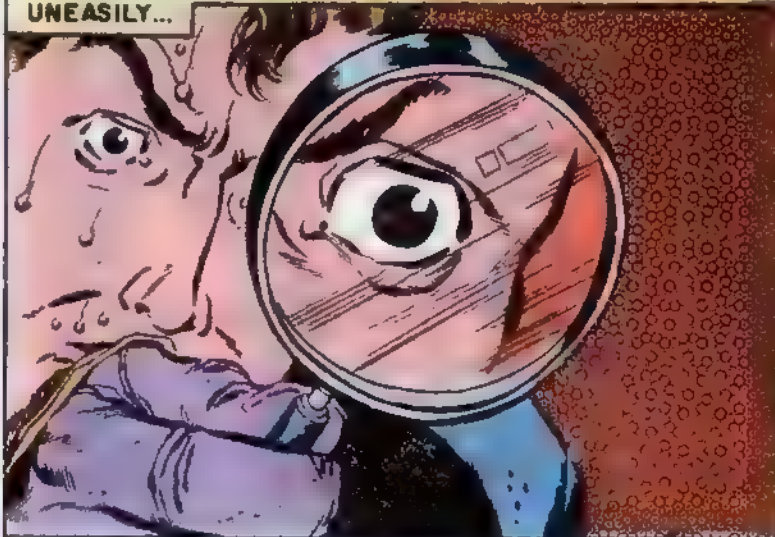
HE GOT ONE WALL FINISHED, AND THEN... HE CAME TO ANOTHER WALL. HE LOOKED AT THE MANTEL CLOCK. AN HOUR GONE. IT WAS FIVE AFTER ONE. HE TURNED AWAY FROM THIS NEW FRESH WALL...



FROM THE CORNERS OF HIS EYES HE SAW THE LITTLE WEBS. WHEN HIS BACK WAS TURNED THE LITTLE SPIDERS CAME OUT OF THE WOODWORK AND SPUN THEIR LITTLE FRAGILE HALF-INVISIBLE WEBS UPON THE THREE WALLS AS YET UNTOUCHED. EACH TIME HE STARED DIRECTLY AT THEM, THE SPIDERS POPPED BACK INTO THE WOODWORK ONLY TO SPINDLE OUT AS HE RETREATED...



HE WENT TO A WRITING DESK AT WHICH HUXLEY HAD BEEN SEATED EARLIER. HE OPENED A DRAWER AND TOOK OUT WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR. A LITTLE MAGNIFYING GLASS HUXLEY SOMETIMES USED FOR READING. HE TOOK THE MAGNIFIER AND APPROACHED THE WALL UNEASILY...



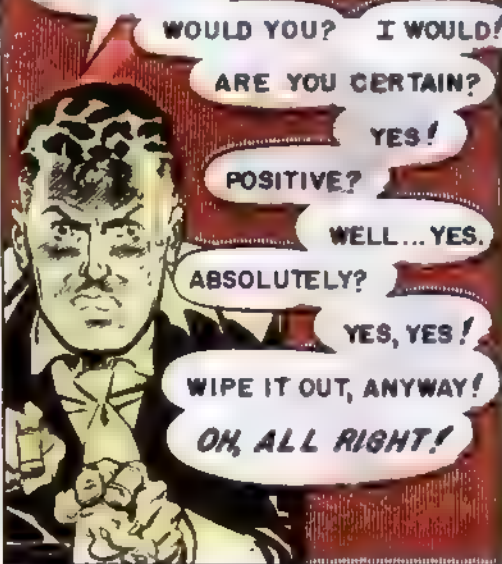
FINGERPRINTS!

BUT THOSE AREN'T *MINE*! I *DIDN'T* PUT THEM THERE! I'M *SURE* I DIDN'T! A SERVANT, A BUTLER, OR A MAID PERHAPS?



THE WALL WAS FULL OF THEM...

LOOK AT THIS ONE HERE, LONG AND TAPERED, A WOMAN'S, I'D BET ON IT!



WOULD YOU? I WOULD!

ARE YOU CERTAIN?

YES!

POSITIVE?

WELL... YES.

ABSOLUTELY?

YES, YES!

WIPE IT OUT, ANYWAY!

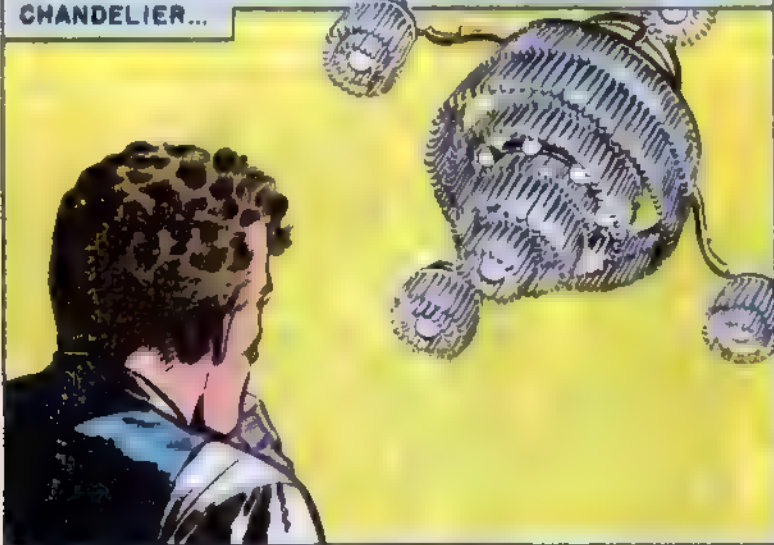
OH, ALL RIGHT!

IN A RAGE HE BEGAN TO SWEEP THE WALL UP AND DOWN AND BACK AND FORTH WITH HIS GLOVED HANDS, SWEATING, GRUNTING AND SWEARING, BENDING AND RISING AND GETTING REDDER OF FACE...





HE FINISHED THE WALL AT TWO O'CLOCK. HE TOOK OFF HIS COAT AND PUT IT ON A CHAIR. HE WALKED OVER TO THE BOWL AND TOOK OUT THE WAXED FRUIT AND POLISHED THE ONES AT THE BOTTOM AND POLISHED THE PICTURE FRAME. HE LOOKED UP AT THE CHANDELIER...



HIS FINGERS TWITCHED AT HIS SIDES. HIS MOUTH SLIPPED OPEN AND THE TONGUE MOVED ALONG HIS LIPS AND HE LOOKED AT THE CHANDELIER AND LOOKED AWAY AND LOOKED BACK AT THE CHANDELIER AND LOOKED AT HUXLEY'S BODY AND THEN AT THE CRYSTAL CHANDELIER WITH ITS LONG PEARLS OF RAINBOW GLASS...



HE GOT A CHAIR AND BROUGHT IT OVER UNDER THE CHANDELIER AND PUT ONE FOOT UP ON IT AND TOOK IT DOWN AND THREW THE CHAIR, VIOLENTLY, LAUGHING, INTO A CORNER. THEN HE RAN FROM THE ROOM LEAVING ONE WALL AS YET UNWASHED...



IN THE DINING ROOM HE CAME TO A TABLE. HE PAUSED OVER THE TABLE WHERE THE BOXES OF CUTLERY WERE LAID OUT, HEARING ONCE MORE HUXLEY'S VOICE...

LOOK AT THIS SILVER, ACTON. EXQUISITE CRAFTSMANSHIP. LOOK AT IT!



NOW ACTON WIPED THE FORKS AND SPOONS AND TOOK DOWN ALL THE PLATES AND SPECIAL CERAMIC DISHES FROM THE WALL SHELF... REMEMBERING ALL THE TOUCHINGS AND GESTURINGS...



HERE'S A LOVELY BIT OF CERAMICS BY GERTRUDE AND OTTO NATZLER, ACTON. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THEIR WORK?



PICK IT UP. TURN IT OVER. SEE THE FINE THINNESS OF THE BOWL, THIN AS EGGSHELL. INCREDIBLE. HANDLE IT, GO AHEAD, I DON'T MIND.



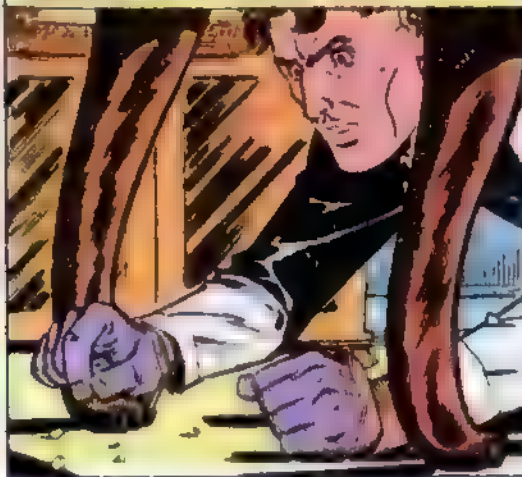
HANDLE IT! GO AHEAD! PICK IT UP!



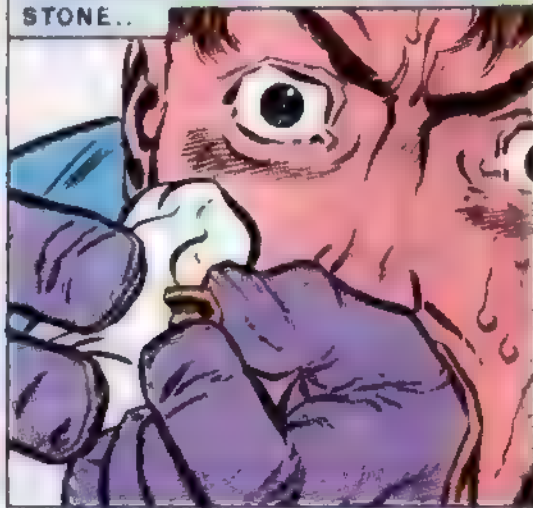
ACTON SOBBED UNEVENLY. HE HURLED THE POTTERY AGAINST THE WALL. IT SHATTERED AND SPREAD, FLAKING WILDLY, UPON THE FLOOR...



AN INSTANT LATER, HE WAS ON HIS KNEES. EVERY PIECE, EVERY SHARD OF IT, MUST BE REGAINED. FOOL, FOOL, FOOL, HE CRIED TO HIMSELF. FIND EVERY PIECE, YOU IDIOT...NOT ONE FRAGMENT OF IT MUST BE LEFT BEHIND. HE GATHERED THEM...



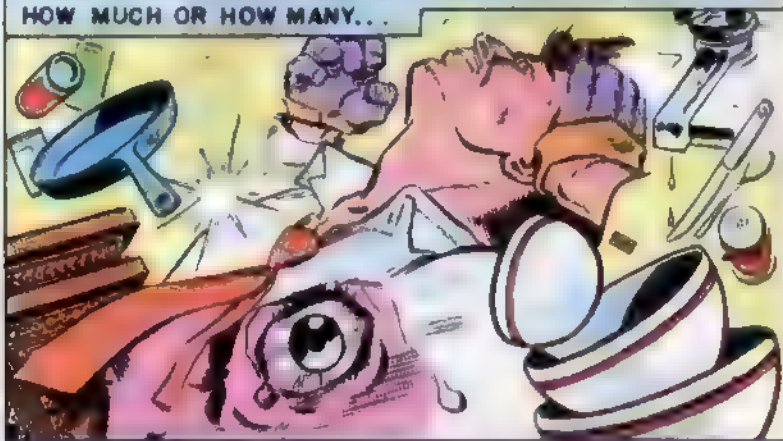
ARE THEY ALL HERE? HE LOOKED UNDER THE TABLE AGAIN AND UNDER THE CHAIRS AND FOUND ONE MORE PIECE BY MATCH-LIGHT AND STARTED TO POLISH EACH LITTLE FRAGMENT AS IF IT WERE A PRECIOUS STONE...



HE TOOK OUT THE LINEN AND WIPED IT AND WIPED THE CHAIRS AND TABLES AND DOORKNOBS AND WINDOW-PANES AND LEDGES AND DRAPES AND WIPED THE FLOOR AND FOUND THE KITCHEN, PANTING, BREATHING VIOLENTLY, AND TOOK OFF HIS VEST AND ADJUSTED HIS GLOVES AND WIPED THE GLITTERING CHROMIUM...



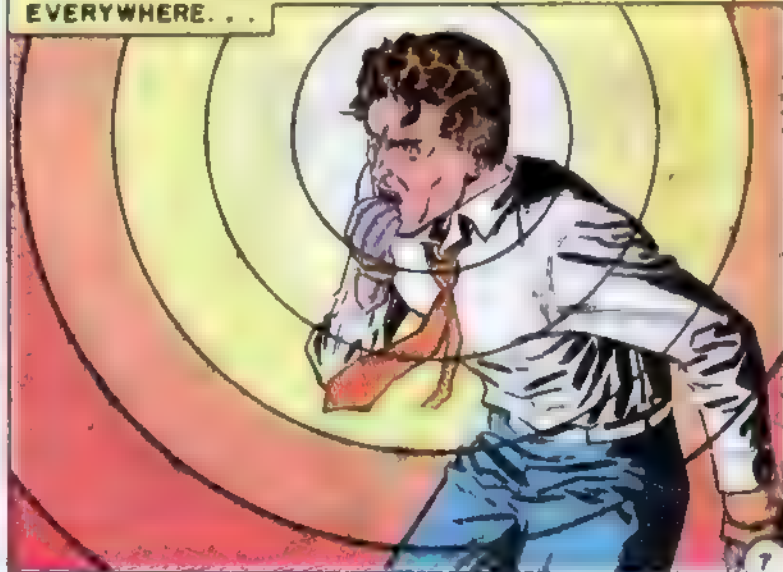
AND HE WIPED ALL THE UTENSILS AND THE SILVER FAUCETS AND THE MIXING BOWLS, FOR NOW HE HAD FORGOTTEN WHAT HE HAD TOUCHED AND WHAT HE HAD NOT. HUXLEY AND HE HAD LINGERED HERE, IN THE KITCHEN, THEY HAD IDLED, TOUCHED THIS, THAT, SOMETHING ELSE, THERE WAS NO REMEMBERING WHAT OR HOW MUCH OR HOW MANY...



AND HE FINISHED THE KITCHEN AND CAME THROUGH THE HALL INTO THE ROOM WHERE HUXLEY LAY. HE CRIED OUT. HE HAD FORGOTTEN TO WASH THE FOURTH WALL OF THE ROOM. AND WHILE HE WAS GONE, THE LITTLE SPIDERS HAD COME OUT OF THE FOURTH UNWASHED WALL AND SWARMED OVER THE ALREADY CLEAN WALLS, DIRTYING THEM AGAIN! ON THE CEILINGS, THE CHANDELIER, IN THE CORNERS, ON THE FLOOR A MILLION LITTLE WHORLED WEBS HUNG BILLOWING AT HIS SCREAM...

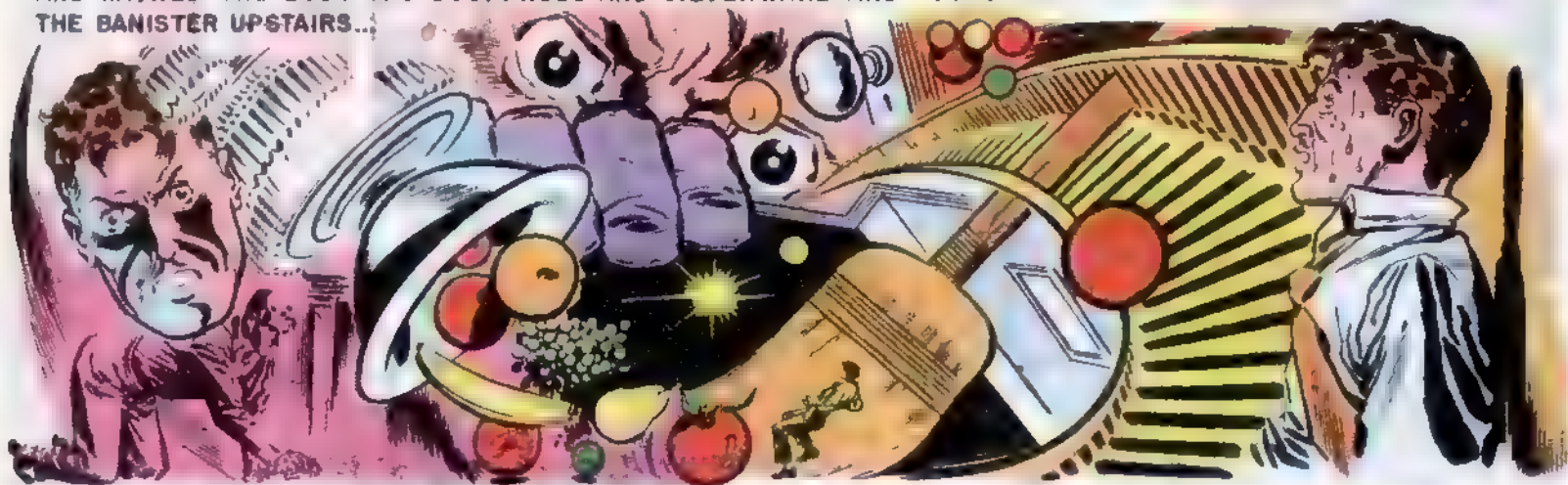


TINY, TINY LITTLE WEBS, NO BIGGER THAN, IRONICALLY, YOUR... FINGER! AS HE WATCHED, THE WEBS WERE WOVEN OVER THE PICTURE FRAME, THE FRUIT BOWL, THE BODY, THE FLOOR. PRINTS WIELDED THE PAPER KNIFE, PULLED OUT DRAWERS, TOUCHED THE TABLE-TOP...TOUCHED, TOUCHED, TOUCHED EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE...

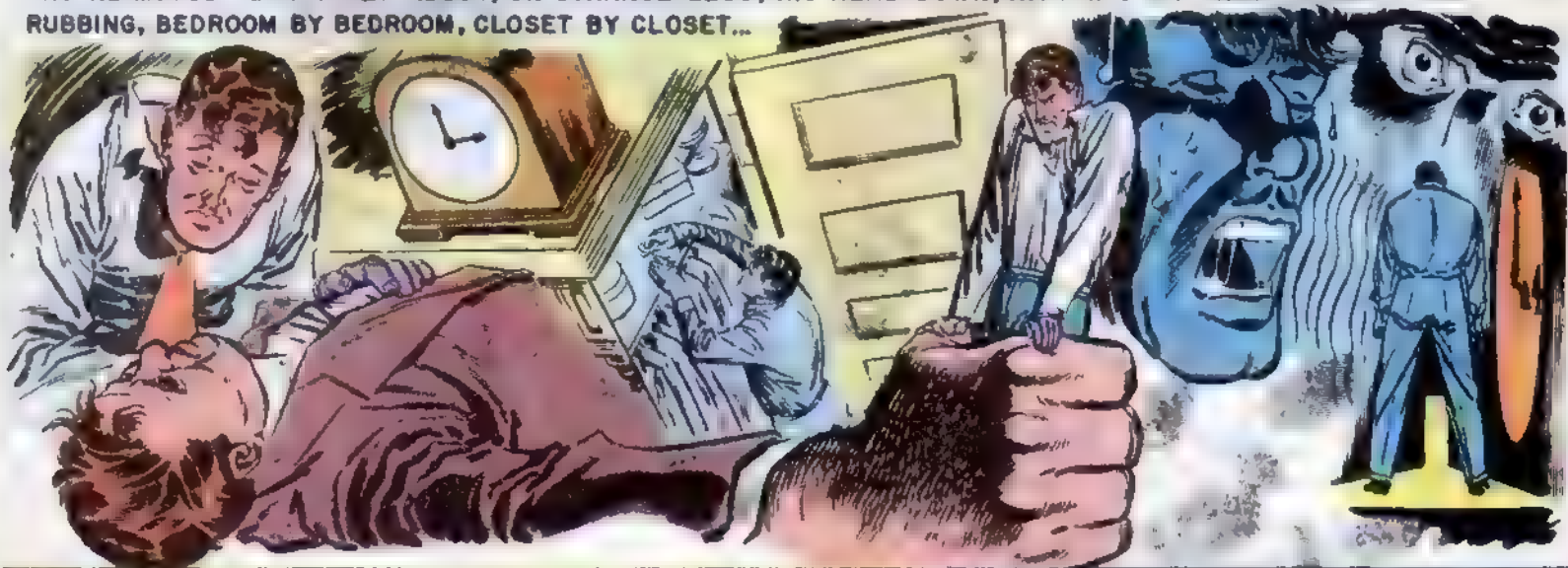




HE POLISHED THE FLOOR WILDLY, WILDLY. HE ROLLED THE BODY OVER AND CRIED ON IT WHILE HE WASHED IT AND GOT UP AND WALKED OVER AND POLISHED THE FRUIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOWL. HE PUT A CHAIR UNDER THE CHANDELIER AND GOT UP AND POLISHED EACH LITTLE HANGING FIRE OF IT, SHAKING IT LIKE A CRYSTAL TAMBOURINE UNTIL IT TILTED BELLWISE IN THE AIR. THEN HE LEAPED OFF THE CHAIR AND GRIPPED THE DOORKNOBS AND GOT UP ON ANOTHER CHAIR AND SWABBED THE WALLS HIGHER AND HIGHER AND RAN TO THE KITCHEN AND GOT A BROOM AND WIPED THE WEBS DOWN FROM THE CEILINGS AND POLISHED THE BOTTOM FRUIT OF THE BOWL AND WASHED THE BODY AND DOORKNOBS AND SILVERWARE AND FOUND THE HALL BANISTER AND FOLLOWED THE BANISTER UPSTAIRS...



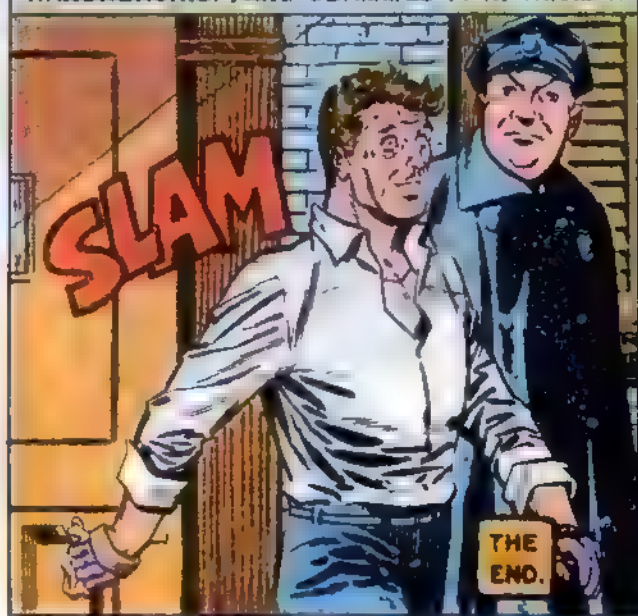
THREE O'CLOCK! THERE WERE TWELVE ROOMS DOWNSTAIRS AND EIGHT ABOVE. ONE HUNDRED CHAIRS, SIX SOFAS, TWENTY-SEVEN TABLES, SIX RADIOS. AND UNDER AND ON TOP AND BEHIND. HE YANKED FURNITURE OUT AWAY FROM WALLS AND, SOBING, WIPED THEM CLEAN OF YEARS-OLD DUST, HANDLING, ERASING, RUBBING, POLISHING, AND NOW IT WAS FOUR O'CLOCK! AND HIS ARMS ACHED AND HIS EYES WERE SWOLLEN AND STARING AND HE MOVED SLUGGISHLY ABOUT, ON STRANGE LEGS, HIS HEAD DOWN, HIS ARMS MOVING, SWABBING AND RUBBING, BEDROOM BY BEDROOM, CLOSET BY CLOSET...



THEY FOUND HIM AT SIX-THIRTY THAT MORNING. IN THE ATTIC. THE ENTIRE HOUSE WAS POLISHED TO A BRILLIANCE. THEY FOUND HIM IN THE ATTIC, POLISHING OLD TRUNKS AND OLD FRAMES AND OLD CHAIRS AND TOYS AND VASES AND ROCKING HORSES AND DUSTY CIVIL WAR COINS. HE WAS HALF THROUGH THE ATTIC WHEN THE POLICE OFFICER WALKED UP BEHIND HIM WITH A GUN...



ON THE WAY OUT OF THE HOUSE, ACTON POLISHED THE FRONT DOORKNOB WITH HIS HANDKERCHIEF, AND SLAMMED IT IN TRIUMPH!





# ONE FOR THE MONEY...

ANITA STOOD BEFORE THE HUGE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT WINDOWS, STARING OUT AT THE SPRAWLING CITY BELOW HER. HER FACE WAS A SCULPTURED MASK... COLD AND EXPRESSIONLESS. AS SHE LISTENED, SHE PUFFED ON HER GOLD CIGARETTE HOLDER, SUCKING THE SMOKE IN AND BLOWING IT OUT THROUGH HEAVILY PAINTED LIPS. THE LIGHT FROM A NEARBY LAMP RIPPLED OVER HER SHEER NEGLIGEE, ACCENTING HER CURVACIOUS FIGURE. BEHIND HER, RONALD'S BROKEN VOICE DRONED ON...

I...I GUESS I BLEED THE BUSINESS DRY, ANITA! THEY CAME WITH THEIR BOOKS AND THEIR LONG LIST OF FIGURES AND THEY SHOWED ME THAT I'D PUSHED THE COMPANY INTO BANKRUPTCY!

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE BROKE, RONALD! YOUR DOUGH'S RUN OUT? IS THAT RIGHT?

HE WAS AN OLDISH MAN, GREYING AT THE TEMPLES. HIS FACE WAS POUCHY AND LINED. HIS EYES WERE DIM AND BLOODSHOT. HE NODDED...

THAT'S ABOUT IT, ANITA BABY! I SPENT IT ALL ON YOU! I PUT YOU UP IN THIS BEAUTIFUL PENTHOUSE... BOUGHT YOU CLOTHES... JEWELRY...

THEN THIS IS IT! THE WIND-UP! THE FINISH!



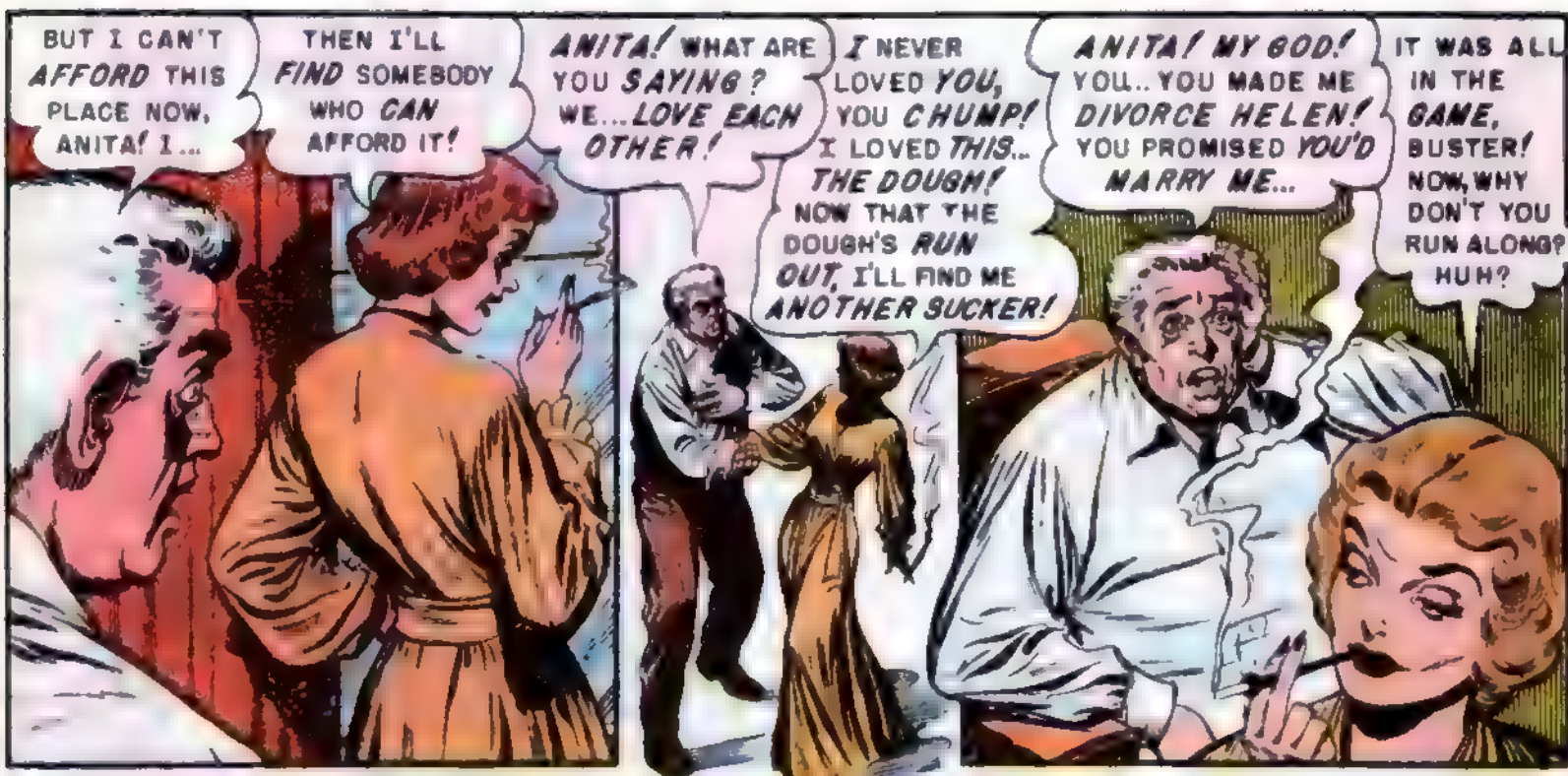
RONALD STARED AT ANITA. HIS MOUTH FELL OPEN...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HONEY? THIS ISN'T THE END AT ALL! I CAN GET A JOB. THINGS WILL BE TIGHT FOR A FEW YEARS, BUT WE'LL HAVE EACH OTHER!

HAH! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH, RONALD! IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO GIVE UP ALL THIS... AND MOVE BACK DOWN THERE... TO THE RAT-HOLES...







BUT I CAN'T AFFORD THIS PLACE NOW, ANITA! I...

THEN I'LL FIND SOMEBODY WHO CAN AFFORD IT!

ANITA! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WE... LOVE EACH OTHER!

I NEVER LOVED YOU, YOU CHUMP! I LOVED THIS... THE DOUGH! NOW THAT THE DOUGH'S RUN OUT, I'LL FIND ME ANOTHER SUCKER!

ANITA! MY GOD! YOU... YOU MADE ME DIVORCE HELEN! YOU PROMISED YOU'D MARRY ME...

IT WAS ALL IN THE GAME, BUSTER! NOW, WHY DON'T YOU RUN ALONG? HUH?

HE STOOD UP. HIS TONGUE CURLED ACROSS DRY LIPS. HE LOOKED AT HER WITH WET EYES. SHE TURNED AWAY, GAZED OUT OF THE WINDOW, AND SUCKED ON HER CIGARETTE...

I'LL... I'LL GET MY THINGS... FROM THE... DRAWER!

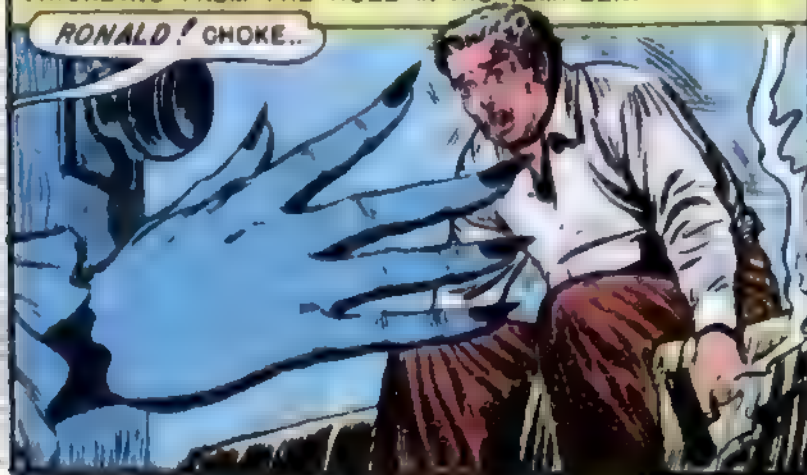
SUIT YOURSELF! ONLY MAKE IT SNAPPY, HUM? I WANT TO GET DRESSED!

HE STUMBLED ACROSS THE LUXURIOUS LIVING ROOM INTO THE BEDROOM AND SLAMMED THE DOOR. SHE CURSED HIM UNDER HER BREATH. NEXT TIME SHE'D BE A LITTLE MORE CAREFUL WHOM SHE PICKED. SUDDENLY...



THE GOLD CIGARETTE HOLDER DROPPED FROM HER MOUTH. SHE DARTED TO THE BEDROOM DOOR AND FLUNG IT OPEN. THE ACID SMELL OF GUNPOWDER FILLED THE ROOM. A TINY WHISP OF SMOKE CURLED UP FROM THE MUZZLE OF THE .45 HE HELD IN HIS HAND. HE SAT ON THE BED, STARING AT HER WITH BLIND EYES, BLOOD TRICKLING FROM THE HOLE IN HIS TEMPLE...

RONALD! CHOKE...



AND THEN HE PITCHED FORWARD, SPRAWLING OFF THE BED ONTO THE FLOOR AT HER FEET. HE WAS DEAD! SHE LOOKED DOWN AT HIM AND SMIRKED...

SUCKER

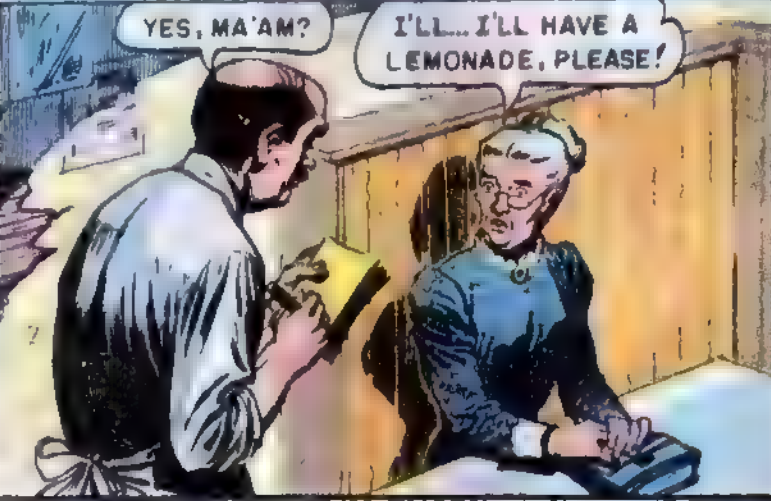




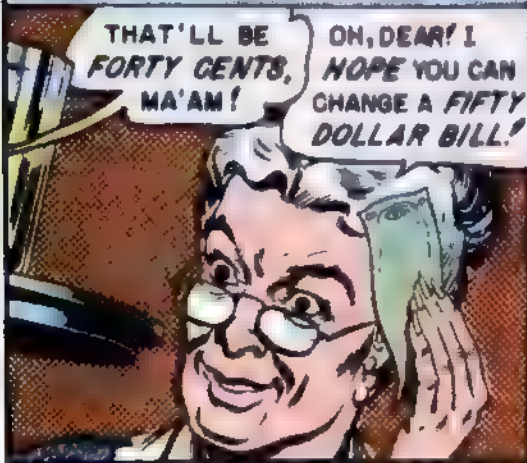
IT WAS HER OLD STAMPING GROUNDS. IT HAD PAID OFF BEFORE. IT COULD PAY OFF AGAIN. ANITA SAT AT THE BAR, NURSING HER DRINK, IGNORING THE BARTENDER'S DIRTY LOOKS. IT WAS HERE THAT SHE'D FIRST 'MET' RONALD. NOW RONALD WAS DEAD. ANITA'S MEAL TICKET HAD BEEN ALL PUNCHED OUT. SHE HAD TO FIND ANOTHER.



ANITA WAS JUST ABOUT READY TO GIVE UP IN DISGUST WHEN THE OLD WOMAN CAME IN. SHE LOOKED AROUND SELF-CONSCIOUSLY AND SAT DOWN AT A BOOTH. SHE LOOKED ABOUT SIXTY...TIMID AND SHY.. NOT THE TYPE ONE WOULD EXPECT TO FIND IN AN ESTABLISHMENT LIKE THAT...



ANITA STUDIED HER. SHE WAS WELL DRESSED. SHE WORE A LARGE DIAMOND RING ON ONE HAND AND A SPARKLING BRACELET ON HER WRIST. WHEN THE BARTENDER SERVED THE LEMONADE, SHE OPENED HER BAG AND TOOK OUT A WALLET FILLED WITH GREEN BILLS...



ANITA GASPED. THIS OLD BAT WAS LOADED. WHAT WAS SHE DOING IN A JOINT LIKE THIS? ANITA SLIPPED OFF HER BAR STOOL AND APPROACHED HER...



ANITA SLID ONTO THE BOOTH BENCH OPPOSITE THE OLD WOMAN...



ANITA SMILED... ALL RIGHT... HARRIET! SAY, WHAT'S A WOMAN LIKE YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS... ANYWAY?



ANITA THOUGHT OF MRS. WALKER'S THICK WALLET GRAMMED WITH BIG BILLS...



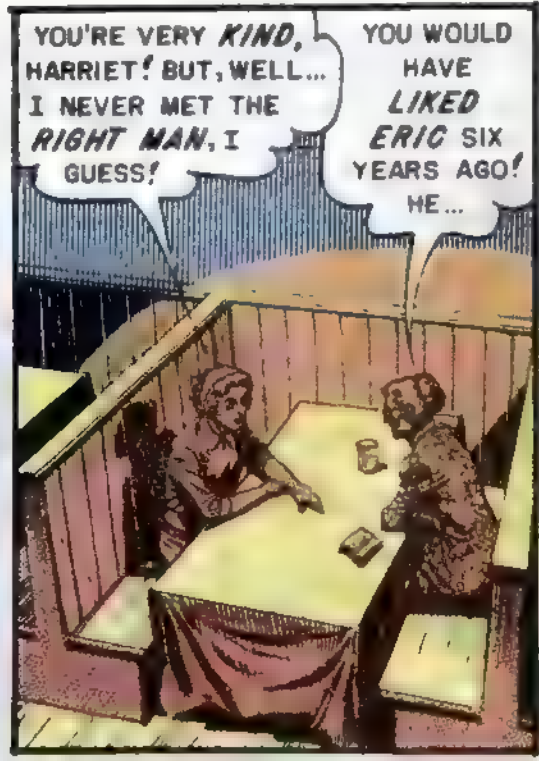




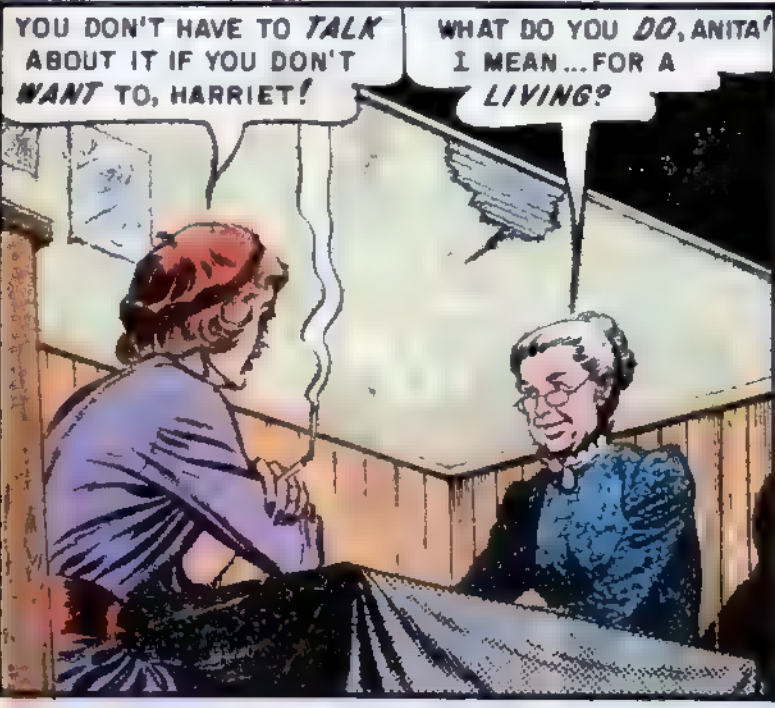
ERIC? MY SON! BUT I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT IT. TELL ME ABOUT YOU, MY CHILD!



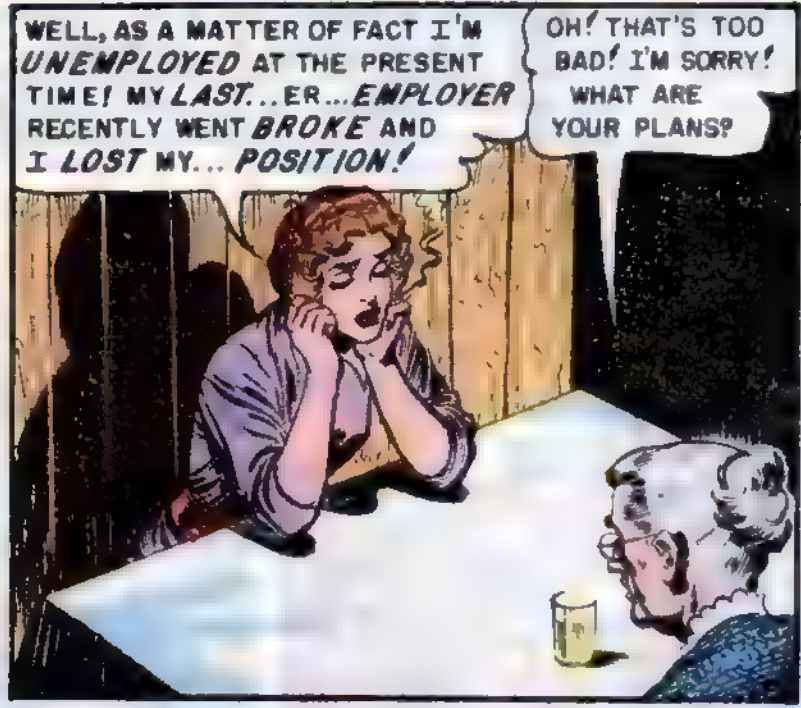
NOTHING TO TELL, HARRIET! I'M JUST A LONELY GIRL MYSELF! YOU'RE A VERY LOVELY GIRL, ANITA! THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO BE LONELY!



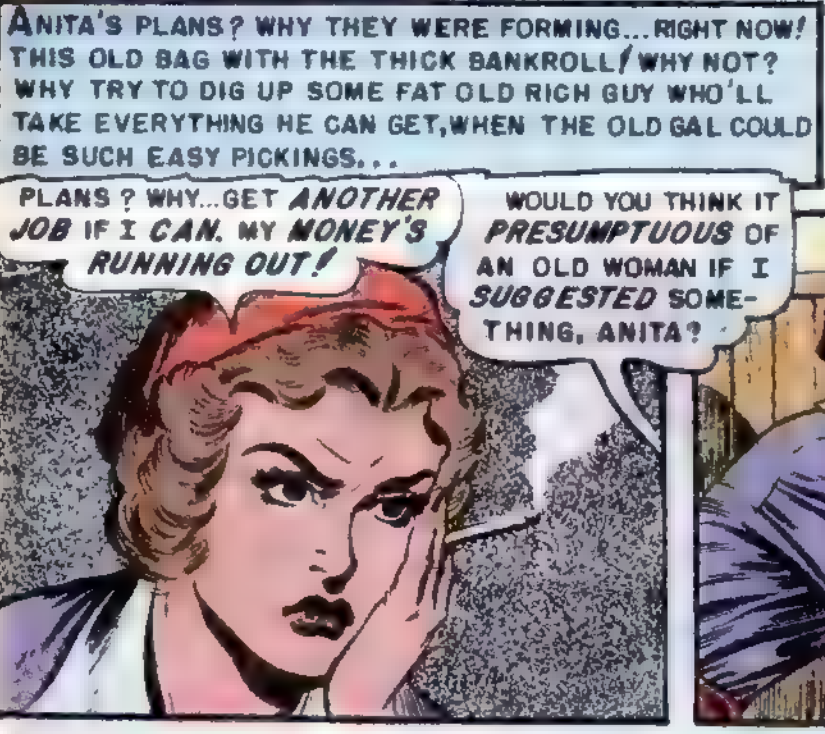
YOU'RE VERY KIND, HARRIET! BUT, WELL... I NEVER MET THE RIGHT MAN, I GUESS! YOU WOULD HAVE LIKED ERIC SIX YEARS AGO! HE...



YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK ABOUT IT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO, HARRIET! WHAT DO YOU DO, ANITA? I MEAN...FOR A LIVING?

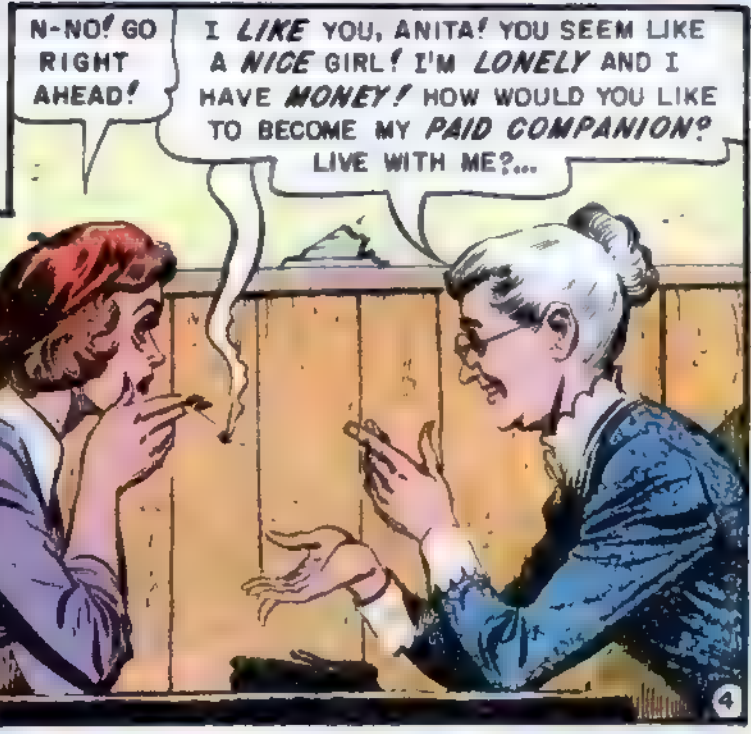


WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT I'M UNEMPLOYED AT THE PRESENT TIME! MY LAST...ER...EMPLOYER RECENTLY WENT BROKE AND I LOST MY... POSITION! OH! THAT'S TOO BAD! I'M SORRY! WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?



ANITA'S PLANS? WHY THEY WERE FORMING... RIGHT NOW! THIS OLD BAG WITH THE THICK BANKROLL/ WHY NOT? WHY TRY TO DIG UP SOME FAT OLD RICH GUY WHO'LL TAKE EVERYTHING HE CAN GET, WHEN THE OLD GAL COULD BE SUCH EASY PICKINGS... PLANS? WHY...GET ANOTHER JOB IF I CAN. MY MONEY'S RUNNING OUT!

WOULD YOU THINK IT PRESUMPTUOUS OF AN OLD WOMAN IF I SUGGESTED SOMETHING, ANITA?



N-NO! GO RIGHT AHEAD! I LIKE YOU, ANITA! YOU SEEM LIKE A NICE GIRL! I'M LONELY AND I HAVE MONEY! HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME MY PAID COMPANION? LIVE WITH ME?...



WHAT A CHANCE! THE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT WAS GONE! ANITA'D ALREADY DECIDED TO TRY AND MILK THE OLD GAL, AND NOW HERE SHE WAS... ASKING FOR IT! ASKING ANITA TO COME AND LIVE WITH HER! WHAT A CHANCE...

A PAID COMPANION! LIVE WITH YOU! BUT...

I'D MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE, ANITA! AND HAVING YOU AROUND WOULD MAKE ME SO HAPPY!

ALL RIGHT, HARRIET! IT SOUNDS WONDERFUL! I'LL TAKE THE JOB!

GOOD! WHEN CAN YOU START?

IT WAS GOING TO BE SO EASY! LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY! SHE'D GO AND LIVE WITH THE OLD WOMAN, WORK INTO HER GOOD GRACES, AND END UP WITH ALL HER DOUGH...

WHY, RIGHT NOW! I'LL GET MY THINGS! I LIVE IN THE HOTEL UP THE BLOCK!

GOOD! I'LL WAIT HERE! HERE'S SOME MONEY TO PAY YOUR BILL!

ANITA TOOK THE FIFTY! SHE HURRIED TO HER HOTEL ROOM! SO EASY! SO VERY EASY...

I'M CHECKING OUT! WHAT DO I OWE...

THAT'LL BE THIRTY-TWO FIFTY, MISS SHELBY! ANY... FORWARDING ADDRESS?

I'LL LET YOU KNOW! SO LONG!

GOOD-BYE, MISS SHELBY! GOOD LUCK!

GOOD LUCK?! YES, ANITA WAS HAVING GOOD LUCK! THIS TIME THERE'D BE NO PAWING CIGAR-SMOKING MALE TO TOLERATE AND PLEASE. YES, THIS WAS LUCK...

OKAY, HARRIET! LET'S GO!

COME, MY DEAR! I HAVE A CAB WAITING!

HARRIET GAVE THE CAB DRIVER THE ADDRESS. IT WAS OVER ON THE SWANK EAST SIDE. ANITA SAT BACK AND SMILED...

WHY... YOU'RE SMILING, ANITA!

I WAS JUST THINKING HOW LUCKY I AM, HARRIET!



THE TRIP TOOK SOME TIME. GROSS-TOWN TRAFFIC WAS SLOW. ANITA FOUND A GOOD OPENING AND BEGAN TO PRY...

YOUR *HUSBAND* MUST HAVE LEFT YOU *VERY WELL OFF*, THEN!

HE MADE A *GREAT DEAL OF MONEY!* WE HAD *EVERYTHING!* WHEN HE DIED, HE LEFT US ALMOST *HALF A MILLION!*



US? OH! *ERIC...*

YES, *ERIC!* *ERIC* WAS *FIFTEEN* WHEN MY HUSBAND DIED! MY, HOW I *SPOILED* THE BOY! HE GOT *EVERYTHING HE WANTED!* *EVERYTHING!* AND THEN, SIX YEARS AGO...



THE CAB STOPPED...

IS THIS IT?

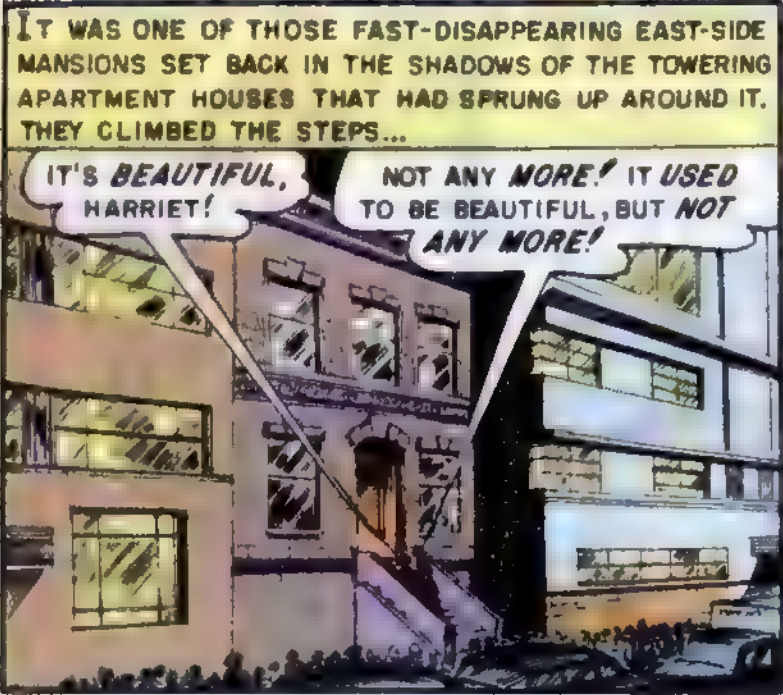
EH? OH! YES, MY DEAR! HOW MUCH WILL THAT BE, DRIVER?



IT WAS ONE OF THOSE FAST-DISAPPEARING EAST-SIDE MANSIONS SET BACK IN THE SHADOWS OF THE TOWERING APARTMENT HOUSES THAT HAD SPRUNG UP AROUND IT. THEY CLIMBED THE STEPS...

IT'S *BEAUTIFUL*, HARRIET!

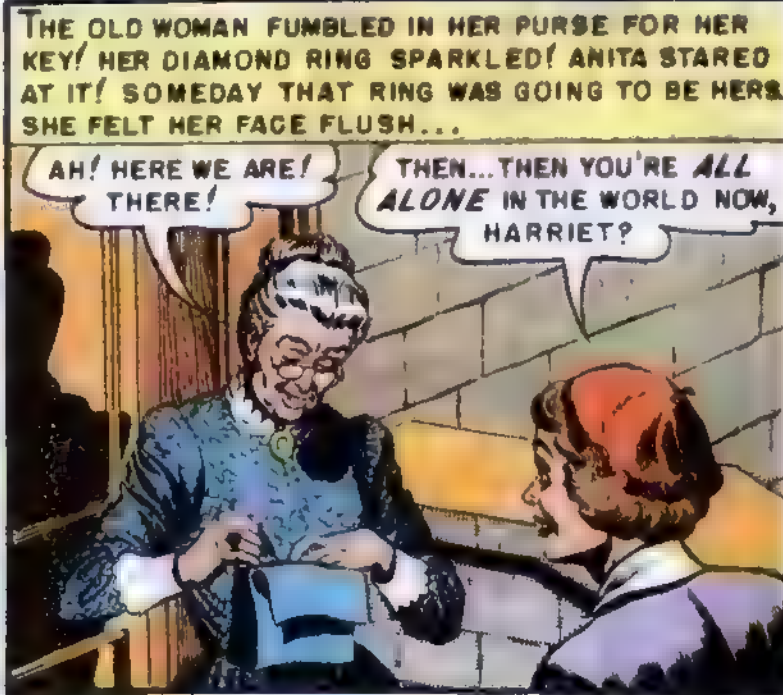
NOT ANY *MORE!* IT *USED* TO BE BEAUTIFUL, BUT *NOT ANY MORE!*



THE OLD WOMAN FUMBLING IN HER PURSE FOR HER KEY! HER DIAMOND RING SPARKLED! ANITA STARED AT IT! SOMEDAY THAT RING WAS GOING TO BE *HERS*. SHE FELT HER FACE FLUSH...

AH! HERE WE ARE! THERE!

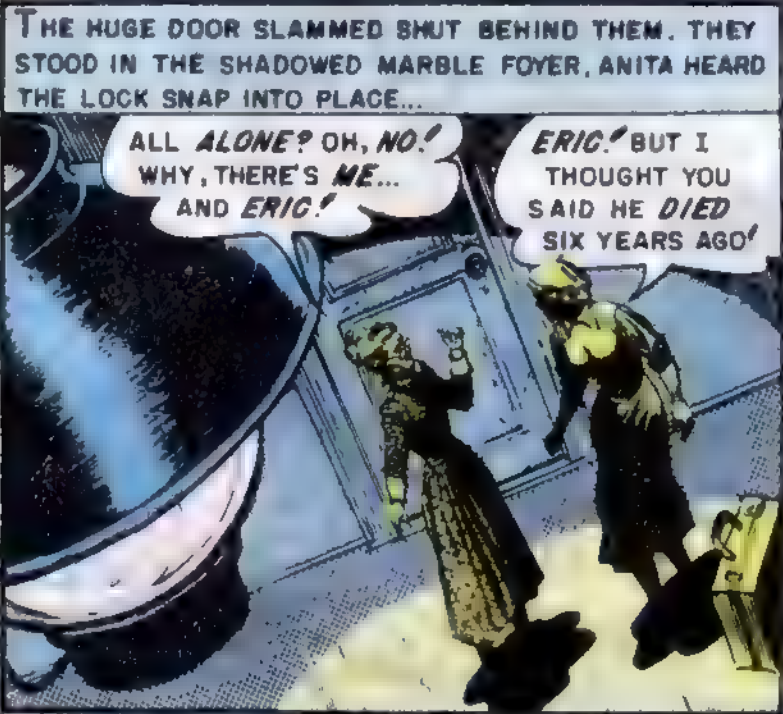
THEN...THEN YOU'RE *ALL ALONE* IN THE WORLD NOW, HARRIET?



THE HUGE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT BEHIND THEM. THEY STOOD IN THE SHADOWED MARBLE FOYER, ANITA HEARD THE LOCK SNAP INTO PLACE...

ALL *ALONE?* OH, *NO!* WHY, THERE'S *ME...* AND *ERIC!*

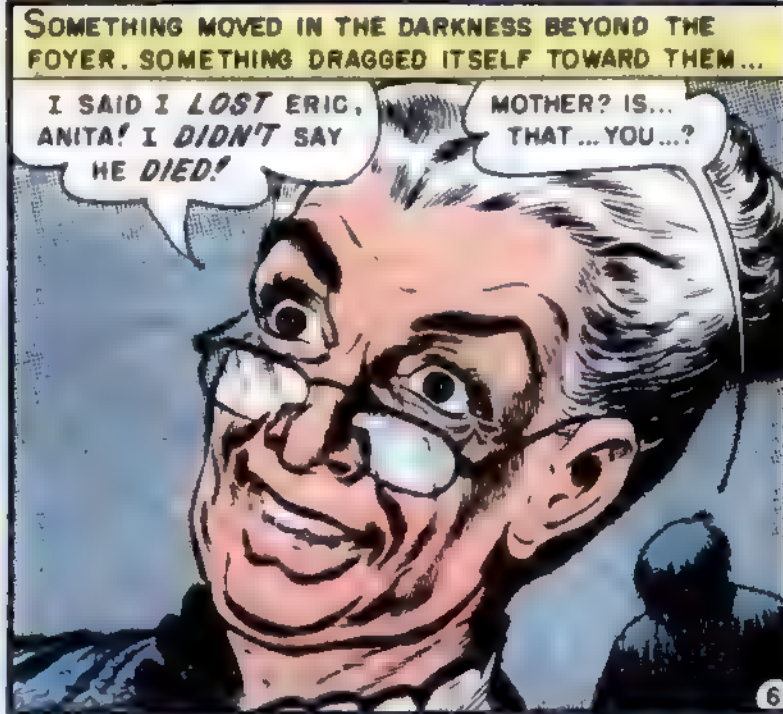
*ERIC!* BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID HE *DIED* SIX YEARS AGO!



SOMETHING MOVED IN THE DARKNESS BEYOND THE FOYER. SOMETHING DRAGGED ITSELF TOWARD THEM...

I SAID I *LOST* *ERIC*, ANITA! I *DIDN'T* SAY HE *DIED!*

MOTHER? IS... THAT... YOU...?





HE CAME OUT OF THE SHADOWS! HE WAS HUGE AND UGLY! HIS HAIR HUNG OVER HIS PERSPIRED BROW. HIS MASSIVE ARMS HUNG AT HIS SIDES. HIS EYES BURNED LIKE WHITE-HOT COALS AND A DROP OF SPITTLE OOZED FROM HIS MOUTH AND DOWN HIS UNSHAVEN CHIN...

THIS IS *ERIC*, MY DEAR! SIX YEARS AGO HE WAS A *NORMAL TWENTY-FOUR YEAR OLD* WITH *EVERYTHING TO LIVE FOR!* AND THEN HE FELL IN *LOVE...FELL IN LOVE* WITH A WOMAN WHO WANTED HIM *ONLY FOR HIS MONEY...*

CHOKER... YOU...YOU BROUGHT HER, MOTHER!



HE MOVED TOWARD ANITA...

HER NAME WAS *NORMA!* SHE USED HER LOVELY BODY TO *LURE HIM...TO BREAK HIS HEART!* HE HAD A *MENTAL BREAKDOWN!* WENT COMPLETELY MAD...

NORMA! NORMA...

NO! NO!...



AND SO, EVERY YEAR ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF *ERIC'S 'LOSS'*, I HAVE TO *BRING HIM A BEAUTIFUL GIRL* LIKE *NORMA* SO THAT HE CAN *HAVE HIS REVENGE...*

NORMA! DON'T TOUCH ME!

...SO THAT HE CAN *MUTILATE HER BODY* THE WAY *NORMA MUTILATED HIS MIND!*

NO! NO! OH, LORD!

AND TODAY I'VE BROUGHT HIM YOU!



THE END



# The CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Welcome, horror and suspensory fanatics, to the first of my newly reinstated columns. After being locked up in the *Crypt of Terror* for the last thirty-five years, it feels good to stretch my legs again. (No, V.K.! Not on your new rack! Chee...)

Anyways...I notice, to my chagrin, that no one has written to me in, well, a L-O-O-ONG time. So you know what I'm going to do? (What's that? Entertain you with a brand new story, you say? NAW! That'd be too much like WORK.) I'm gonna cop out and dig up some of my *old* letters and run 'em *again*. Sorta give you an idea of what the fans thought of me in the bad old days. After all, if you like my stories about mouldy old *corpses*, you oughta love these mouldy old *letters*.

For this issue's offering, I thought I'd share with you what my original readers thought about the copy of *Tales From the Crypt* you just enjoyed. And after you've read *their* thoughts, why don't you wrack your fevered li'l brains and come up with some comments of your own? Let me know what you latter-day unleashed fiends think of my fright rag. Now, on with the letters:

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

Your origin story, "Lower Berth," was tops in nausea. So *THAT'S* where you came from! WOW! How horrible can you get?

Stuart Glass  
Lynbrook, N.Y.

...I almost chewed my claws off reading "Lower Berth."

Nidred, the Were-cat  
Salisbury, N.C.

...In the title, "Lower Berth," didn't you mean to spell the second word "Birth"?

Astute Observer  
Bloomington, Ind.

No, Astute, I didn't mean to spell "Berth" "Birth"...but I wanted "Berth" to mean "Birth"...get what I mean? I mean...(OH, SHUT UP! Get on with the column, if you know what WE mean!—ed.) Ooooooh, you're so mean! (That's what we mean!—ed.)

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I'm getting a big kick out of those Grim Fairy Tales. "The Funeral" was the greatest!

Dick Mandel  
Boston, Mass.

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I'm thoroughly convinced that E.C. magazines are of the highest quality money can buy. There is not another comic on the stands today that can compare, even in part, with the high standards maintained by your magazine. Being a fifth year art student, I am constantly critical of comic art, and in my estimation, the artwork in your books rates supreme.

Roger A. Nippess  
Bridgeport, Mich.

...I would go over Niagara Falls WITHOUT a barrel for an E.C. magazine.

Fred Barth  
Peoria, Ill.

How touching. I tell you, when I think of my delightfully deranged fan(atic)s of yore, I get fears in my eyes!

And now, here's some original commentary on this issue's *Crime SuspenStories* offering:

Dear Editors,

In *Crime SuspenStories* No. 17, I especially enjoyed the way you intermingled the two narratives...ONE FOR THE MONEY, and TWO FOR THE SHOW. As usual, not knowing what to expect till the ending of the latter, I was completely taken by surprise. I sincerely hope that you'll pull a switch like that again.

David S. Spiel  
Milton, Mass.

...I've read many a different, cunning, and interesting story in your mags, but those two just about top them all...

Allan Katz  
Kew Gardens, L.I.

...I fear, gentlemen, you have made a mistake. Mother always sends their bodies to Kalamazoo...not Peoria. Oh, goodie! She's brought me another surprise! So if you'll excuse me...NORMA! NORMA!

Art "Eric" Walker  
Binghamton, N.Y.

Dear Editors,

I would jump off the Empire State Building for an E.C. magazine.

John Reid  
Hollywood, Calif.

We suppose you expect US to pay your plane fare east!!! But seriously, John...don't jump off the Empire State Building...jump on your newsdealer! He'll be glad to sell you an E.C.

Dear Editors,

I just don't know what to say. I wonder how you can keep on publishing such good stories. I'm afraid you're going to run out. If you do, I'll just stop reading comics. Because E.C. are THE ONLY comics!

G. W. Sheridan  
Gainesville, Ga.

Ah, memories! And I fully expect to collect a whole batch of new ones from you modern, 1990s kinda readers. So find yourselves a cozy, clammy nook, pick up your poison pens, and WRITE already!



For the second part of this month's putrid ramblings, I'd like to acquaint and reacquaint you beady-eyed perusers with the part of my column that's always been nearest my tender old heart. (That's it...up there on the shelf in the meat tenderizer! Gettin' tenderer every day!) I'm referring to the section wherein I used to list the titles of popular songs, movies and etcetera of the day...but titles that my readers had, *heh heh*, transmogrified with a scream-theme in mind. Here are some examples, starting with these horrific song titles:

BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL GROUND EYES  
AFTER THE MAUL IS OVER  
I BELIEVE (THAT FOR EVERY DROP OF BLOOD  
THAT FALLS, A VAMPIRE GROWS)  
WITH A TONG IN MY HEART  
I'M SLITTING BY THE WINDOW (WATCHING THE  
BLOOD-DROPS FALL)  
THE SQUEAL OF TORTURE  
I'M WINCING WITH SPEARS IN MY THIGHS  
RATTLE HYMN OF THE REPULSIVE  
ON THE TAINTED SIDE OF THE MEAT  
WHO'S GORY NOW?  
DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEX  
YOU'D BE SO NICE TO COME GROAN TO  
THE GIRL THAT I BURY  
SEND ME ONE DOZEN NOSES  
JUNE IS GUSHING OUT ALL OVER  
HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY THAT I LOATHE YOU?  
GHOULS RUSH IN WHEN HUMAN BEINGS ARE  
DEAD  
LET'S HAVE ANOTHER CUT OF COFFIN, (AND  
LET'S HAVE ANOTHER PIECE OF EYE)  
RED LIVER VALLEY  
DON'T LET THE BLOOD GET IN YOUR EYES  
(DON'T LET THE CRUD CAKE IN YOUR  
HEART)  
I'M BACK IN THE COFFIN AGAIN (OUT WHERE  
A FIEND IS A FIEND)  
STAKE ME OUT IN THE BALL PARK

These additions to our LURID LITERATURE LIBRARY were sent along by Jimmy Crow of Dallas, Texas; Jimmy Teel of Pineville, W. Va.; and Drury Moroz of Springfield, Ill.:

SQUISH FAMILY ROBINSON  
WITHERING SIGHTS  
HOW GREEN WAS MY SALLY  
THE LASH OF THE MOHICANS  
THE GIZZARD OF OOZE  
ROMEO...THE GHOUL HE ET!  
LORNA'S DOOM

Darrel Gould of Grand Lake Stream, Maine and Sue Campbell and Amelia Alexander of Waynesville, N.C. came up with these MORBID MOVIES:

A STREETCAR MAIMED MY SIRE  
THE AFRICAN'S SPLEEN  
HIGH STREWN  
THE GREATEST CHOKE ON EARTH  
WRING SOLOMON'S SPINE

So, now that you've read all this dire doggerel, maybe you're feeling inclined to come up with some of your own loathsome titles. If so, the Vault-Keeper, the Old Witch, and I would love to see 'em...so send 'em on in...but keep in mind that us coots are now more than 100 years old and we haven't been let out of our tombs lately—so we're not hep to some of this modern trash you kids call entertainment. So let us know what the real titles are, okay?

Send your song, movie and book titles, your poems and lyrics, your proverbs and (thought I'd forgotten, didn't you?) your letters of comment to me:

Here are some poems, the first by Michael Britcant of N.Y.C.:

*Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet,  
Watching the ghouls at play  
When along came a vampire and sat  
down beside her  
And sucked all her blood away.*

And this one from Michael Graziano of Babylon, L.I.:

*When I was young, I killed four people  
And hid them in an old church steeple.  
I'd seen them sleeping in their beds,  
Raised my hammer, and smashed their heads.  
When their bodies were found in the church,  
The police started a nine-state search.  
That was back in May of '43  
But they never have located me.  
(The reason that I beat the law  
Is that I died a year before!)*

Leoniece Baer submitted this one:

*Down by the old mill stream  
Where I first clawed you  
You were sixteen  
You let out a scream  
You'll never be seventeen...*

A chap by the name of "Unsigned" from Chicago composed:

*A vampire took me home one night  
To drink some blood and dine...  
But it came as quite a shock to learn  
The blood we drank was mine!*

And finally, a suggestion for a new department...PUTRID PROVERBS...was submitted by Herbert Teisch, along with a few inspiring thought-provokers:

*There's no ghoul like an old ghoul.  
Vampires who live in glass coffins shouldn't throw  
stakes.  
Never put off till tomorrow who you can drain  
today.  
Don't count your pickin's before they're  
hatcheted.  
Late to rise and late to bed, means you're a  
vampire and ought to be dead.  
A stitch in time saves blood.  
One man's person is another man's meat.*

**The Crypt-Keeper**  
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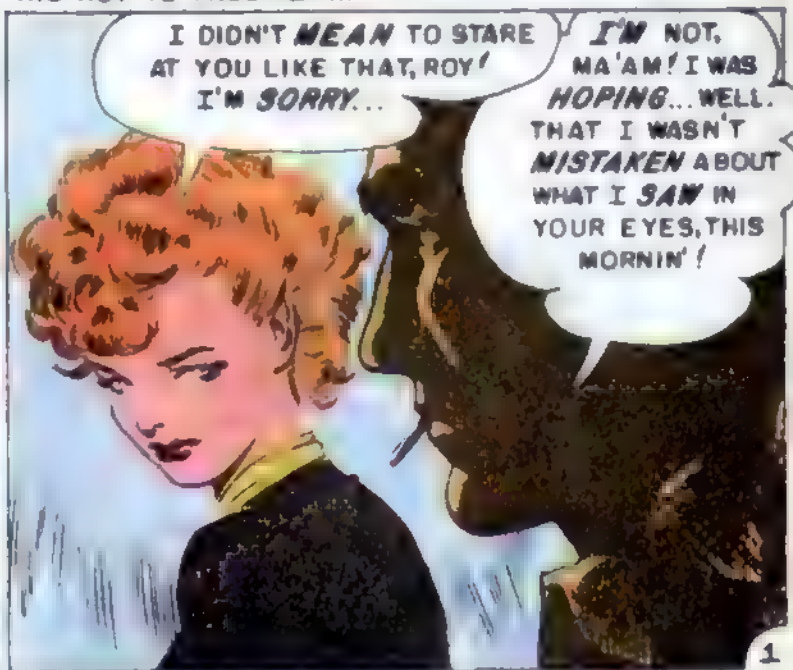
# FIRE!



HE WAS TALL AND BROAD-SHOULDERED, AND HIS WINDSWEEPED BLACK HAIR FELL IN A CURLED SHOCK OVER HIS PERSPIRING BROW. HE AMBLED TOWARD PATRICIA, HIS EYES TRAVELING OVER HER...



PATRICIA LOOKED AWAY. SHE STEPPED ASIDE, ALLOWING ROY TO PASS HER...







HE STOOD OVER HER. SHE TURNED TO HIM...

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU SAW, ROY?

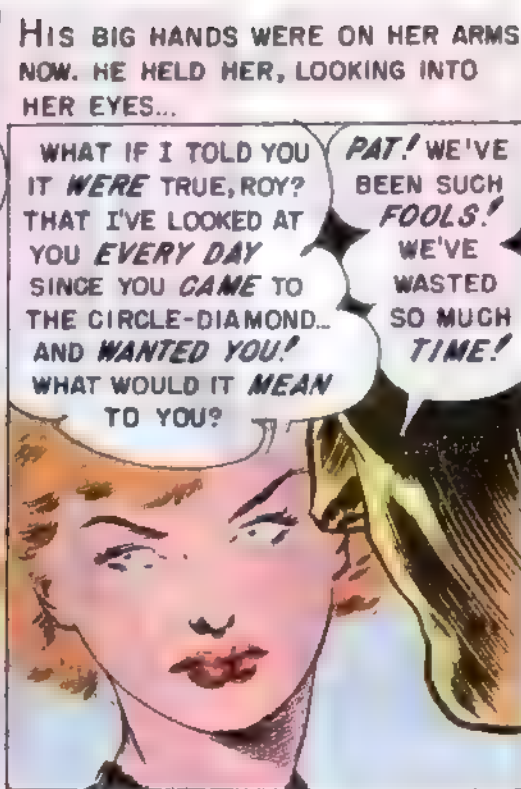
I... I *THOUGHT* IT WAS THE LOOK OF A WOMAN WHO *WANTED* A MAN *REAL BAD*, MA'AM! *THIS MAN...*



SHE STARED AT THE FLOOR. HER FACE FLUSHING. ROY MOVED CLOSER...

THAT'S A RATHER *BRAZEN THOUGHT*, ROY!

TELL ME IT *ISN'T TRUE*, AND I'LL GO, MA'AM!



HIS BIG HANDS WERE ON HER ARMS NOW. HE HELD HER, LOOKING INTO HER EYES...

WHAT IF I TOLD YOU IT *WERE TRUE*, ROY? THAT I'VE LOOKED AT YOU *EVERY DAY* SINCE YOU *CAME* TO THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND... AND *WANTED YOU!* WHAT WOULD IT *MEAN* TO YOU?

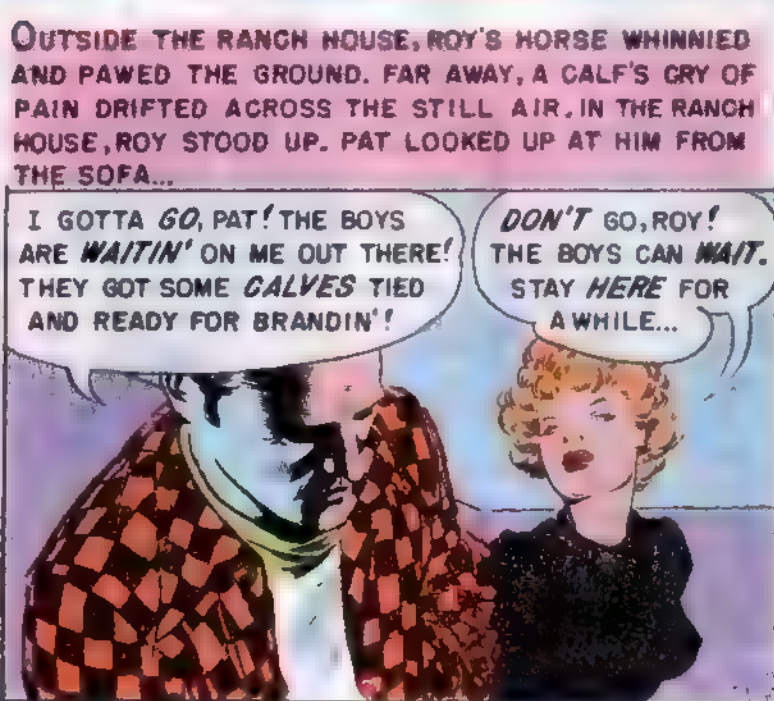
*PAT!* WE'VE BEEN SUCH *FOOLS!* WE'VE WASTED SO MUCH *TIME!*



AND NOW HIS ARMS WERE AROUND HER, PULLING HER TOWARD HIM...

ROY! DARLING...

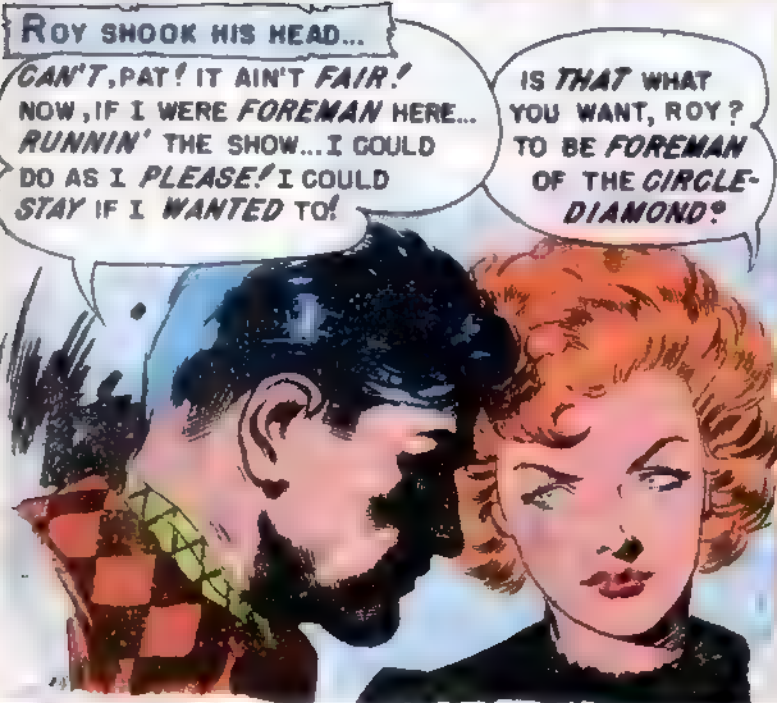
PAT...



OUTSIDE THE RANCH HOUSE, ROY'S HORSE WHINNIED AND PAWED THE GROUND. FAR AWAY, A CALF'S CRY OF PAIN DRIFTED ACROSS THE STILL AIR. IN THE RANCH HOUSE, ROY STOOD UP. PAT LOOKED UP AT HIM FROM THE SOFA...

I GOTTA GO, PAT! THE BOYS ARE *WAITIN'* ON ME OUT THERE! THEY GOT SOME *CALVES* TIED AND READY FOR BRANDIN'!

*DON'T GO, ROY!* THE BOYS CAN *WAIT*. STAY *HERE* FOR AWHILE...



ROY SHOOK HIS HEAD...

*CAN'T, PAT!* IT AIN'T *FAIR!* NOW, IF I WERE *FOREMAN* HERE... *RUNNIN'* THE SHOW... I COULD DO AS I *PLEASE!* I COULD STAY IF I *WANTED TO!*

IS *THAT* WHAT YOU WANT, ROY? TO BE *FOREMAN* OF THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND?



ROY NODDED AND SAT DOWN. PAT PUT HER CHEEK AGAINST HIS LIPS...

IF IT'LL MAKE YOU *HAPPY*, ROY, THE JOB IS *YOURS!* ALL I ASK IS... YOU KEEP *ME* HAPPY... IN *RETURN!*

IT'LL BE A *PLEASURE*, PAT! A *REAL PLEASURE...*



THE SUMMER WANED AND ROUND-UP TIME CAME TO THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND. THE STEERS WERE HERDED AND DRIVEN FROM THE GRAZING LANDS TO THE CORRALS...

THAT DOGGIE'S *STRAYIN'*, TIM!

I'LL BRING 'ER IN LINE, ROY!

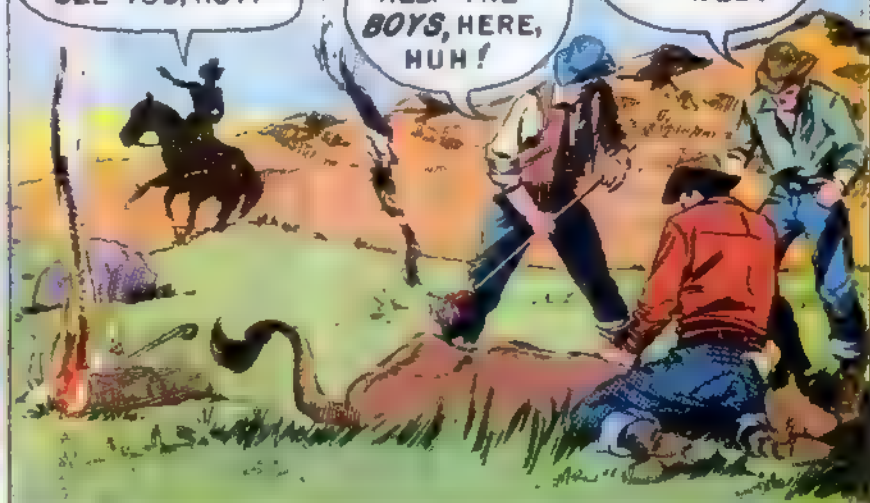


THE CATTLE DESTINED FOR THE SLAUGHTER HOUSES WERE SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF THE HERD AND DRIVEN EASTWARD. THE YOUNG CALVES BORN OUT ON THE RANGE WERE BRANDED...

MISS PAT WANTS TO SEE YOU, ROY!

OKAY, TIM! HELP THE BOYS, HERE, HUH?

HOLD 'IM, NED!

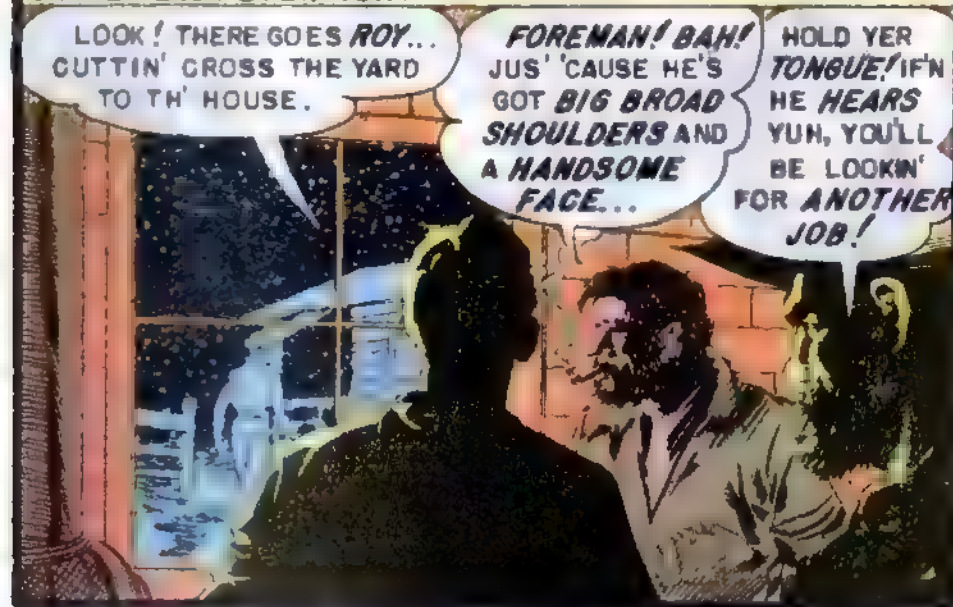


AND THEN WINTER MOVED IN... BLEAK AND COLD. AROUND THE POT-BELLIED STOVE IN THE BUNKHOUSE, THE HANDS WOULD GATHER EACH EVENING...

LOOK! THERE GOES ROY... CUTTIN' CROSS THE YARD TO TH' HOUSE.

FOREMAN! BAH! JUS' 'CAUSE HE'S GOT *BIG BROAD SHOULDERS* AND A *HANDSOME FACE*...

HOLD YER TONGUE! IF N HE HEARS YUH, YOU'LL BE LOOKIN' FOR ANOTHER JOB!



AND ALL THROUGH THE LONG WINTER...

NICE HERE BY THE FIRE, HUH, ROY?

YEAH! COZY...



BUT LONG WINTERS MEAN MORE THAN JUST COLD WEATHER. LONG WINTERS MEAN BOREDOM...

WHERE YOU GOIN', ROY?

INTO TOWN! ANY OBJECTIONS?



N-NO! YOU CAN GO INTO TOWN WHENEVER YOU WANT! ANYTHING WRONG?

JUST WANT A *CHANGE OF SCENE* THAT'S ALL! I'M TAKIN' THE CAR!



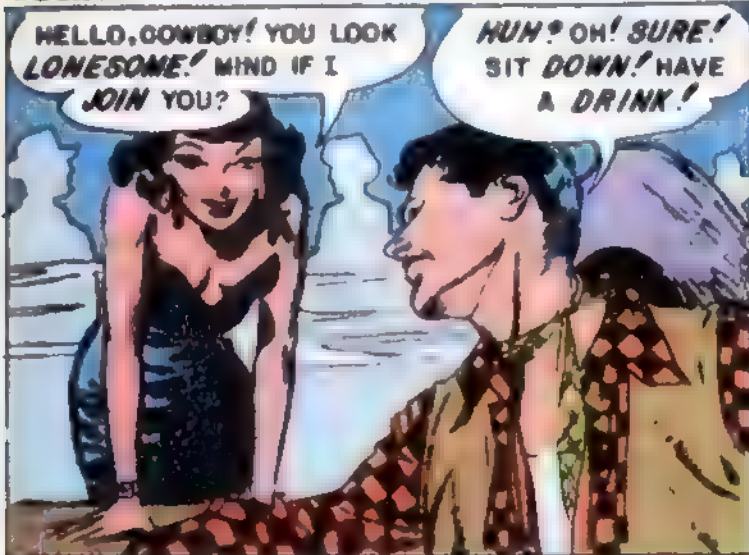
ALL RIGHT, ROY! I'LL... *WAIT UP* FOR YOU!

DON'T BOTHER!

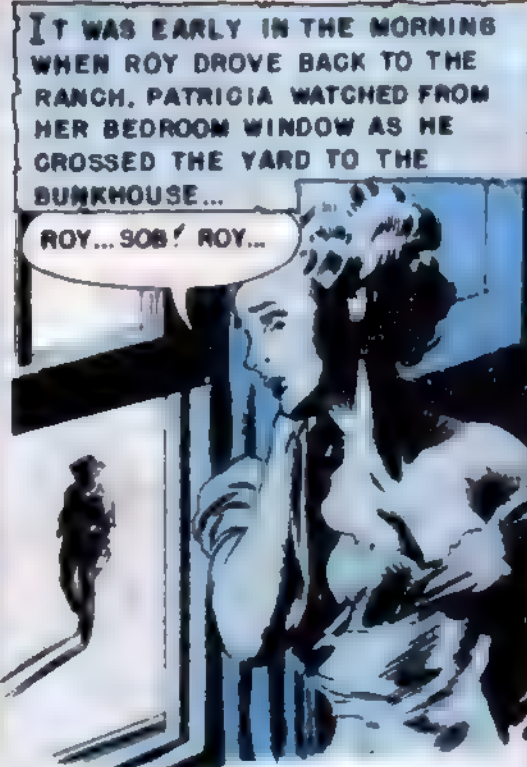




ROY SPED OFF AND PAT WATCHED THE YELLOW CLOUD OF DUST DISAPPEAR INTO THE GATHERING TWILIGHT, HER EYES FILLING WITH TEARS. THAT NIGHT... IN TOWN...



SHE WAS PAINTED AND CHEAP-LOOKING... THE TYPE THAT COULD RELIEVE BOREDOM...



ROY'S TRIPS TO TOWN THAT WINTER BECAME MORE AND MORE FREQUENT. HE SAW LESS AND LESS OF PAT...



AND HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH AMY BECAME WARMER AND WARMER...





AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, IN A ROOM OVER THE SALOON WHERE AMY WORKED...



ROY, HONEY! WHEN ARE WE GOIN' T'GET MARRIED? YOU BEEN PROMISIN'...

SOON, BABY! SOON...

SO...

IT WAS PAT. SHE'D FOLLOWED ROY TO TOWN. SHE STOOD IN THE DOORWAY, HER EYES BLAZING...



SO THIS IS HOW YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING YOUR NIGHTS IN TOWN?

PAT! YOU GOT A NERVE BUSTIN' IN HERE LIKE THIS! GET OUT!

WHO'S SHE, ROY?

PATRICIA GIBSON'S MY NAME, HONEY. DIDN'T ROY TELL YOU ABOUT ME?

GET OUT, WHAT PAT! I'LL SEE YOU WHEN I GET BACK TO THE RANCH!

TELL HER, ROY! TELL HER ABOUT US!

I SAID GET OUT, PAT!

I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU HAD NO TIES, ROY!

HAH! THAT'S A LAUGH! HE'S ALL MINE, HONEY... AND NOBODY'S TAKIN' HIM AWAY FROM ME...

SHE'S CRAZY, AMY!

YOU'D BETTER LEAVE, AND YOU CAN TAKE HIM WITH YOU!



AMY SLAMMED THE DOOR. ROY AND PAT STOOD OUTSIDE IN THE HALL SHADOWS...

THAT WASN'T NICE OF YOU, ROY... TELLING AMY YOU HAD NO TIES...

I DON'T! I STILL DON'T!

I DON'T BELONG TO ANYBODY, PAT! NEITHER YOU... NOR AMY! I TAKE WHAT I GET! IT'S A BIG RANGE AND I GRAZE WHERE THE GRASS IS GREENEST! NOW I GUESS IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GIT MOVIN'! I'LL GO BACK TO THE RANCH WITH YOU AND GET MY THINGS...

ALL RIGHT, ROY! LET'S GO...





THE BOYS IN THE BUNK HOUSE WATCHED ROY AS HE PACKED HIS CLOTHES...



PAT CALLED TO HIM FROM THE RANCH HOUSE AS HE WALKED PAST...



YOU FORGOT SOMETHIN', ROY!

YEAH? WHAT?



ROY CAME INTO THE RANCH HOUSE, PAT CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM AND SILENTLY LOOKED AT AS ROY LOOKED AROUND...



THE BLAZE IN THE FIREPLACE BURNED BRISKLY...



PAT DARTED TO THE FIREPLACE...SNATCHING THE BLACK HANDLE FROM THE FLAMES, THE DESIGN GLOWED WHITE-HOT...



WHEN THE BUNK HOUSE BOYS FINALLY BROKE INTO THE RANCH HOUSE, THEY FOUND PATRICIA GIBSON SOB-BING HYSTERICALLY, THE COOLING IRON IN HER HANDS! AND ON ROY'S FACE WAS THE BLISTERED AND CHARRED RESULTS OF HER WORK...





# ...TWO FOR THE SHOW!

THE STORM BREWED. ITS THUNDER WAS THE HAMMERING ROAR OF A POUNDING HEART. ITS LIGHTNING WAS THE FLASH OF HATE IN GLAZED EYES. THE STORM CARRIED WITH IT, IN SWIRLING CLOUDS OF EMOTION, THE CRASHING FURY OF MURDER. THE STORM CROUCHED IN THE CELLAR, READY TO LEASH FORTH ITS ANGRY FORCE, ITS SCREAMING DOWNPOUR. IT CROUCHED IN THE CELLAR AND BOILED AS THE CELLAR DOOR OPENED. IT ROSE UP, BLACK AND FOREBODING, AS SHE CAME DOWN THE CREAKING WOODEN STAIRS. AND THEN, AS SHE REACHED THE BOTTOM, THE STORM BROKE...

HARRY! MY GOD! EEEEEEEEEEE...



ELDER

SHE WAS DEAD. HARRY STOOD OVER HER, THE DRIPPING HATCHET HANGING LIMPLY. DEEP DOWN INSIDE HIM, THE LAST FAINT ECHO OF THE STORM DIED AWAY AND A CALM DESCENDED. THE THUNDER IN HIS HEART WAS GONE... THE LIGHTNING IN HIS EYES DIMMED...

IT...IT'S DONE, SARAH.  
IT'S... DONE...



THERE WAS A PEACE IN HARRY NOW... AS IF A GREAT BLACK CLOUD HAD BEEN SWEEPED AWAY AND THE SUN WAS AT LAST SHINING ON HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME. AND THERE WAS COOLNESS THERE... THE COOLNESS OF A DETERMINED MAN... A MAN WHO'D FREED HIMSELF FROM THE FIRES OF HATE. HE TOOK THE SHOVEL AND BEGAN TO DIG...

I'LL BURY YOU, SARAH...  
HERE... IN THE CELLAR.  
I'LL BURY YOU AND THEN  
I'LL REPORT YOU MISSING.  
I'LL TELL THEM YOU WENT  
AWAY AND NEVER CAME  
BACK...





THE HOLE IN THE CELLAR YAWNED HUNGRILY. HARRY FED IT SARAH'S BODY, AND THE BLACKNESS GULPED IT DOWN...

IN... YOU... GO...

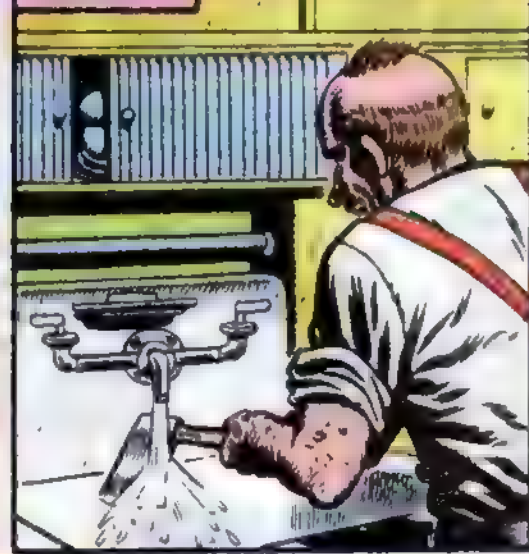


THEN THE BLACK MOUTH SHUT ON SARAH AS HARRY SHOVELED THE DIRT BACK INTO THE HOLE. HE SPREAD THE EXCESS DIRT AROUND AND TAMPED IT DOWN...

THERE! FINISHED...



HARRY CARRIED THE SHOVEL AND AXE UP THE CELLAR STAIRS INTO THE KITCHEN. HE TURNED ON THE SINK-TAP AND THE WATER SPLASHED FROM THE CHROME FAUCET. FIRST... HE RINSED THE BLOOD FROM THE HATCHET...



NEXT... HE FLUSHED THE SOIL FROM THE SHOVEL AND LET IT WASH DOWN THE DRAIN. THEN... HE TOOK THEM BOTH OUT TO THE TOOL SHED AND PUT THEM ON THEIR PROPER HOOKS...

ABOUT MIDNIGHT, I'LL CALL THE POLICE. I'LL TELL THEM SARAH DIDN'T COME HOME FROM WORK TONIGHT...

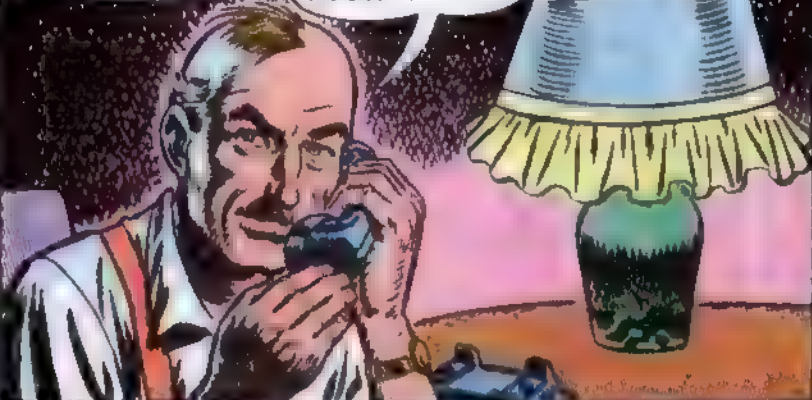


HARRY WENT BACK INSIDE AND SAT DOWN IN HIS FAVORITE CHAIR. HE PICKED UP THE EVENING PAPER, LIT HIS PIPE, AND BEGAN TO READ. IT WAS AS IF NO STORM HAD EVER LASHED OUT THAT NIGHT. IT WAS AS IF NOTHING HAD EVER HAPPENED...



AT MIDNIGHT, HARRY MADE HIS CALL. HE ACTED UPSET...

THAT'S RIGHT. SARAH JAMESON, 125 ELM. SHE... SHE **HASN'T COME HOME FROM WORK. NO!** NO, SHE **DIDN'T GO TO A MOVIE!** SHE WOULD HAVE **TOLD ME!** NO, SHE'S **NOT VISITING!** IT'S **AFTER MIDNIGHT!** SHE **NEVER STAYS OUT THIS LATE!** WHAT? YOU'LL PUT OUT AN **ALARM?** GOOD. YOU'LL STOP BY IN THE **MORNING?** ALL **RIGHT.**



IN THE MORNING, THE DETECTIVE CAME. HARRY WAS READY...

I... I THOUGHT SOMETHING **HAPPENED** TO HER, OFFICER. I'M **SORRY.** BUT **AFTER** I SPOKE TO YOU, I WENT TO **BED.** I FOUND THIS **NOTE...** ON MY **PILLOW.** SHE... SHE'S **LEFT ME!**

OH? LET'S SEE.





THE DETECTIVE READ THE NOTE HARRY HAD CAREFULLY FORGED. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD...

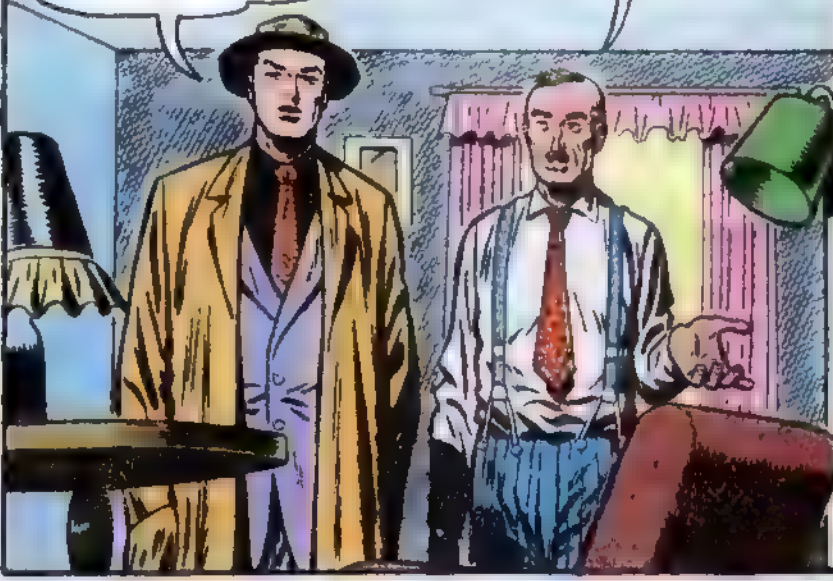
WELL... THIS KIND OF THING HAPPENS *EVERY DAY*, MR. JAMESON. *MAYBE* SHE'LL COME BACK. WHO *KNOWS*...

I... I *HOPE* SO. I... I GUESS I WAS A *THOUGHT-LESS HUSBAND*. I NEVER DREAMED SHE'D... SOB...



MIND IF I *LOOK AROUND*, MR. JAMESON... AS LONG AS I'M *HERE*?

NOT AT ALL! GO RIGHT AHEAD.



THE DETECTIVE OPENED THE BED-ROOM CLOSET DOOR. HARRY HAD FORSEEN THAT. HE'D BURNED SARAH'S CLOTHES IN THE FURNACE...

AFTER I READ THE NOTE, I *LOOKED* IN HERE. I *SAW* SHE'D PACKED HER THINGS...

HMMM. YES, I SEE...



HARRY OPENED SARAH'S BUREAU DRAWER...

HER *UNDERTHINGS*... *EVERYTHING*... *GONE*. SHE MUST HAVE COME HOME FROM WORK AND PACKED AND LEFT *BEFORE I GOT HOME*...

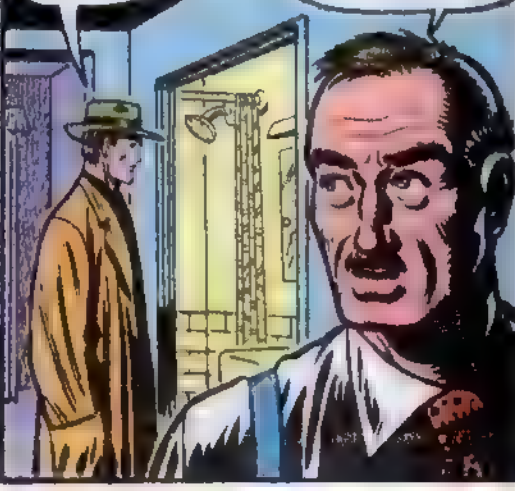
LOOKS THAT WAY...



THE DETECTIVE SNOOPED AROUND SOME MORE. HE SEEMED SATISFIED. HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE WHEN HE STOPPED AT THE OPEN BATHROOM DOOR. HE STARED IN. HARRY FELT A SUDDEN CHILL...

*THAT'S FUNNY!*

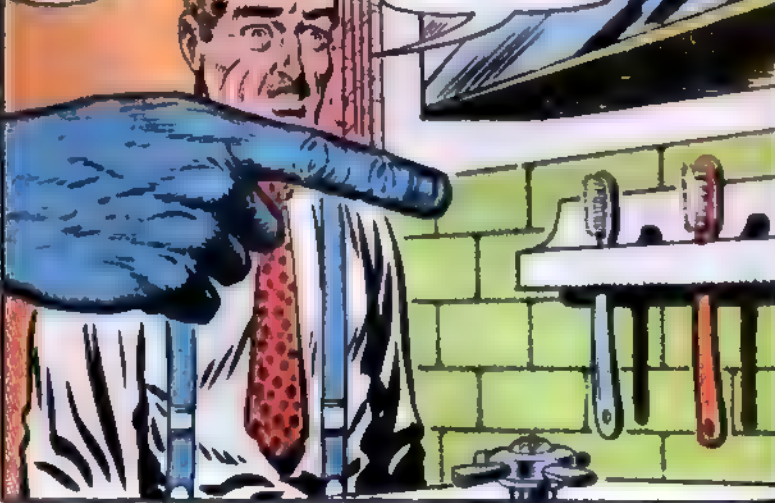
WHAT'S THAT, OFFICER?



THE DETECTIVE WENT TO THE RACK ABOVE THE SINK. HE POINTED AT THE TWO TOOTHBRUSHES...

*MRS. JAMESON'S?*

HUH? OH, YES! SHE SHE MUST HAVE *FOR-GOTTEN* IT!



THE DETECTIVE SHOOK HIS HEAD. HE LOOKED AT HARRY. LOOKED AT HIM HARD...

FOR A WOMAN WHO *PACKED* SO CAREFULLY... TO *FORGET* HER *TOOTHBRUSH*, MR. JAMESON? I HARDLY THINK SO!

I... I DON'T *UNDERSTAND*, SIR! WHAT ARE YOU *DRIVING* AT?





**THE DETECTIVE GRIMACED...**

I HAVE A *FEELING*, MR. JAMESON... A FEELING THAT SOMETHING'S *WRONG* HERE. IF YOU DON'T MIND, I THINK WE'LL *INVESTIGATE* YOUR WIFE'S SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE *AFTER ALL*.

WHY...WHY OF *COURSE*, OFFICER. GO *RIGHT AHEAD...*

...AND WHEN YOU *FIND* HER, TELL HER I'M *SORRY*.. TELL HER TO *COME BACK* TO ME...TELL HER I *NEED* HER. *WILL YOU?*

YEAH, MR. JAMESON'SURE. I'LL TELL HER... *IF I FIND HER!*

**THE DETECTIVE WAS GONE. HARRY STOOD AT THE DOOR, SHIVERING...**

HE *KNOWS*. I... I'VE GOT TO *DO* SOMETHING. HE'LL *COME BACK WITH A WARRANT!* THEY'LL SEARCH THE HOUSE.. FIND THE FRESH-DUG GRAVE IN THE CELLAR. I'VE GOT TO *DO* SOMETHING...

**HARRY WENT UP INTO THE ATTIC. HE PULLED THE TRUNK FROM BENEATH THE PILE OF DUSTY OLD RELICS...**

YES. YES. IT'S THE *ONLY WAY*. I'VE GOT TO *GET HER BODY OUT OF THE HOUSE*... GOT TO GET *RID* OF IT. AND I THINK I *KNOW HOW*...

**HARRY DRAGGED THE TRUNK DOWN INTO THE CELLAR. THEN HE WENT TO THE TOOL SHED, AND GOT THE SHOVEL AND THE HATCHET AND BROUGHT THEM TO THE CELLAR. HE BEGAN TO DIG...**

AN *UNIDENTIFIABLE BODY*.. IN A TRUNK. HOW COULD THEY TRACE IT TO *ME*...?

**SARAH'S BATTERED AND BLOODY BODY WAS STIFF WITH RIGOR MORTIS WHEN HARRY LIFTED IT FROM ITS GRAVE. HE DUMPED IT INTO THE TRUNK...**

NOW TO MAKE *SURE* IT WILL BE AN *UNIDENTIFIABLE* BODY

**HARRY PICKED UP THE HATCHET AND BEGAN TO HACK. THE BLADE ROSE AND FELL... ROSE AND FELL...UNTIL THE THING BEFORE HIM MELTED AWAY INTO A MASS OF RED BLOBS AND WHITE BONE... COUNTLESS SEVERED SECTIONS OF A ONCE WHOLE HUMAN BODY...**

UGH... UGH...UGH... GASP! *THERE!* THAT OUGHT TO DO IT!



THE TRAIN PULLED OUT AND HARRY BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF. AFTER A WHILE HE WENT FORWARD TO THE BAGGAGE CAR...

JUST CHECKING. YOU HAVE A **BROWN TRUNK**... OH... THERE IT IS!

THIS ONE? **266-95!** TO PEORIA?



HARRY CHECKED HIS TICKET...

**NO! 266-81... TO CHICAGO!** OH... **HERE IT IS.** WHY THEY'RE **ALMOST EXACTLY ALIKE!**

THAT HAPPENS. I DON'T WORRY I'LL BE CAREFUL, SIR!



HARRY WENT BACK TO THE CLUB CAR. HIS BLOOD FROZE AS HE ENTERED. THE DETECTIVE WAS SITTING THERE, DRINKING A LEMONADE...

CHOKES...



HARRY DUCKED BACK, FAST. HIS HEART BEGAN TO POUND LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER. THAT BLASTED DETECTIVE. HE WAS **HOUNDING** HARRY... FOLLOWING HIM TO CHICAGO. AND AT CHICAGO, THERE'D BE NO SARAH TO MEET HARRY... AND HE'D GET SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THE TRUNK...

THE **TRUNK!** OF COURSE! WHAT A **BREAK!**



HARRY MADE HIS WAY BACK TO THE BAGGAGE CAR...

THAT **OTHER TRUNK!** IF I COULD **SWITCH TICKETS**, MY TRUNK WILL BE TOSSED OFF AT **PEORIA**... WITH **SARAH'S REMAINS** IN IT...



THE BAGGAGE CAR WAS DIMLY LIT AS HARRY ENTERED. THE CLERK DOZED IN A CORNER. HARRY SLIPPED PAST HIM...

AND I'LL HAVE THE **OTHER ONE**. I'LL BE **SAFE!**



HARRY UNTIED THE TICKETS AND SWITCHED THEM. HE PATTED HIS TRUNK... THE ONE WITH THE GRISLY CARGO...

SO LONG, SARAH! **SOMEBODY** IN **PEORIA** IS GOING TO BE **AWFULLY SHOCKED** TO SEE WHAT'S LEFT OF YOU...





THEN HE LOCKED THE TRUNK AND DRAGGED IT OUT TO HIS CAR. AFTER REFILLING THE HOLE IN THE CELLAR AND CLEANING HIS TOOLS ONCE MORE, HE DROVE DOWN-TOWN TO THE RAILROAD STATION...

I'D LIKE TO BUY A TICKET TO *CHICAGO*, PLEASE, ON THE NEXT TRAIN. *PULL-MAN... LOWER BERTH...*

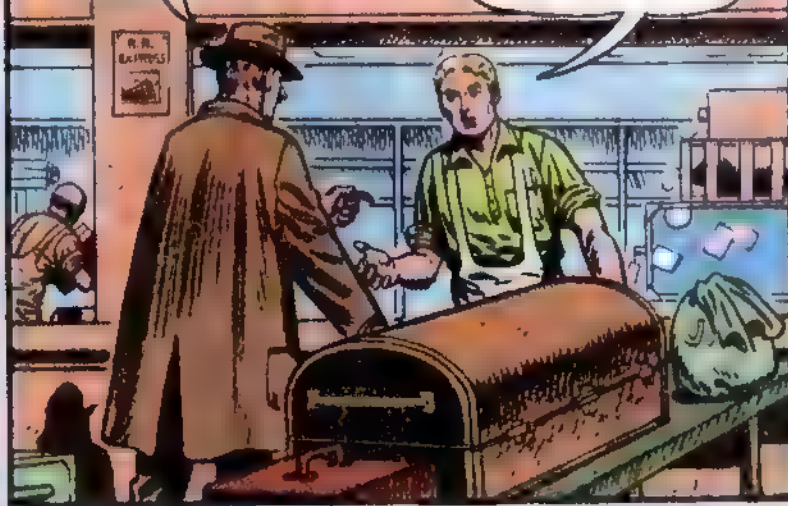
THAT WILL BE \$42.50, SIR! HERE YOU ARE. YOU LEAVE IN TWENTY MINUTES...



AFTER PURCHASING HIS TICKET, HARRY DROVE THE CAR AROUND TO THE BAGGAGE RAMP...

I'D LIKE THIS TRUNK SENT ON TO *CHICAGO*! HERE'S MY TICKET.

YES, SIR! THAT WILL GO ON THE SAME TRAIN, SIR! IN THE BAGGAGE CAR...



IT WAS SO SIMPLE. NO NAME ON THE TRUNK. NOTHING BUT A NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE TICKET HARRY NEVER INTENDED TO USE. THAT IS, UNTIL...

GOING SOMEWHERE, MR. JAMESON?

HUH? OH! IT'S YOU...



HE'D FOLLOWED HARRY. HE SUSPECTED. HARRY SMILED...

YES! IT'S MY WIFE. SHE CALLED... FROM *CHICAGO*. ALL IS FORGIVEN. I'M GOING THERE. SEE? MY TICKET.

... AND THE TRUNK?



SARAH TOOK ALL OUR SUITCASES. IT'S THE ONLY THING I COULD PACK MY CLOTHES INTO. YOU SEE, WE'RE STAYING ON A WHILE... SORT OF A SECOND HONEYMOON.

THAT'S NICE, MR. JAMESON. I'M HAPPY FOR YOU... FOR BOTH OF YOU. I'LL SEE YOU OFF...



HARRY'D HAVE TO GO NOW. THERE WAS NO WAY OUT. THE TRAIN WAS LEAVING IN TEN MINUTES. HARRY WENT THROUGH THE GATE ABSENTLY, TRYING TO THINK. WHAT COULD HE DO WITH THAT TRUNK? HOW COULD HE GET RID OF IT? THE DETECTIVE WAS AT HIS SIDE...

WELL, GOOD-BYE, OFFICER. THANK YOU... FOR EVERYTHING.

THERE'RE A FEW MINUTES LEFT, JAMESON! I'LL WALK YOU TO YOUR SEAT.



HARRY FOUND HIS CAR AND WENT INSIDE. THE DETECTIVE FOLLOWED. HE SMILED DOWN AT HARRY...

WELL, GIVE MY REGARDS TO MRS. JAMESON WHEN YOU SEE HER.

I WILL, OFFICER. AND THANKS AGAIN!





CHICAGO'S LA SALLE STREET STATION CAME UP AMID WHISTLE SCREAMS AND HISSING STEAM. HARRY PEERED OUT OF THE WINDOW. SOMEONE LEANED OVER HIS SHOULDER. THE DETECTIVE...

SEE HER, JAMESON?

N-NO! SHE... SHE PROBABLY DIDN'T GET MY MESSAGE...

YOU DON'T SEEM VERY SURPRISED TO SEE ME, JAMESON!

I'M NOT! I SAW YOU IN THE CLUB CAR LAST NIGHT! WELL, I'VE GOT TO BE GOING, OFFICER!

NOT SO FAST, JAMESON! I HAPPEN TO THINK YOUR WIFE ISN'T GOING TO SHOW UP HERE IN CHICAGO AT ALL. I HAPPEN TO THINK YOU MURDERED HER, AND HER BODY'S IN THAT TRUNK OF YOURS.

YOU HAPPEN TO BE WRONG, OFFICER. CARE TO TAKE A LOOK?

HARRY AND THE DETECTIVE MADE THEIR WAY TO THE BAGGAGE OFFICE, AND HARRY PRESENTED HIS TICKET...

GO AHEAD, OFFICER. OPEN 'ER UP!

NOT HERE, JAMESON. AT HEADQUARTERS. OH, PORTER...

THEY RODE ACROSS CHICAGO TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN SILENCE. HARRY CHUCKLED TO HIMSELF. HE'D BEEN PRETTY CLEVER. THE TRUNK WAS BROUGHT INTO A SMALL ROOM. THE DETECTIVE LIFTED THE LID...

GOOD LORD!

WELL? SATISFIED, OFFICER? NOW, CAN I... OH, MY GOD!

A MASS OF RED BLOBS AND WHITE BONE FILLED THE TRUNK... COUNTLESS SEVERED SECTIONS OF A ONCE HUMAN BODY. HARRY SCREAMED AS THE HANDCUFFS WERE SNAPPED ON HIS WRIST...

YOU SWITCHED THEM BACK! YOU SWITCHED THE TICKETS BACK! YOU KNEW I KILLED HER AND YOU SWITCHED THEM BACK...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT JAMESON, BUT THANKS FOR THE CONFESSION. G'MON, LET'S GO!

MEANWHILE, IN ONE OF THOSE FAST-DISAPPEARING EAST SIDE MANSIONS, HARRIET WALKER STOOD OVER HER INSANE SON, RUNNING HER HAND THROUGH HIS SHAGGY HAIR...

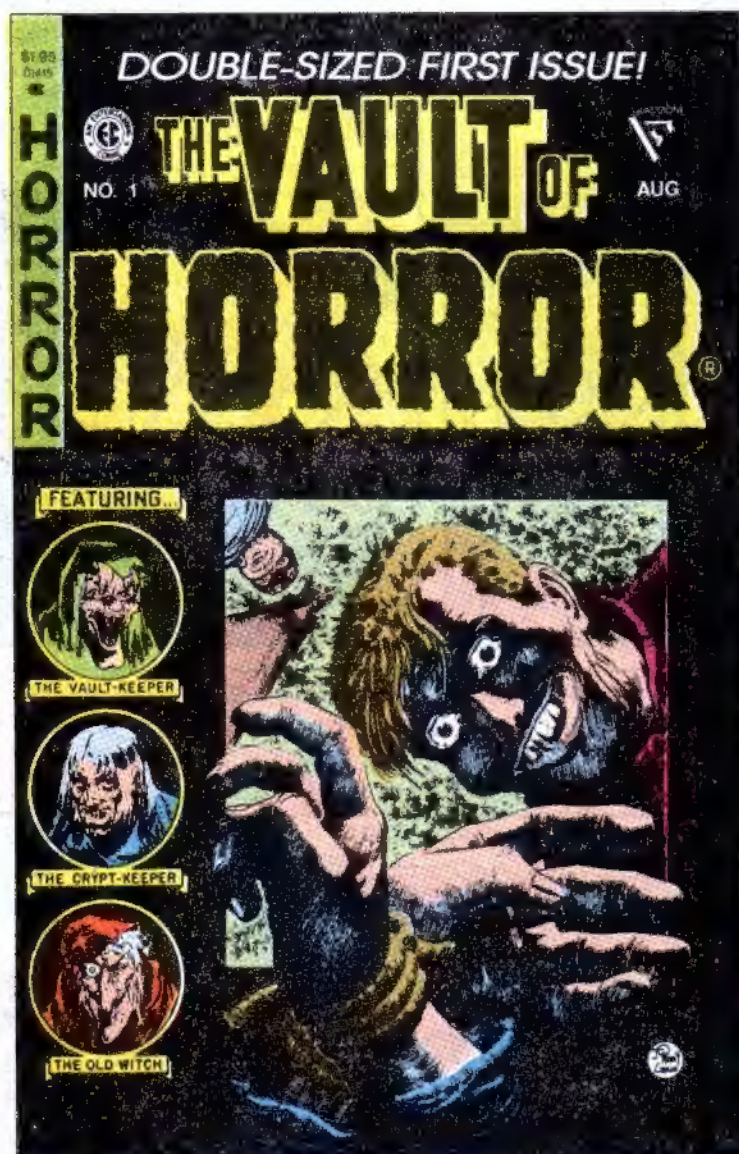
DID YOU... DID YOU GET RID OF WHAT WAS LEFT OF HER, MOTHER?

YES, ERIC. CLEVERLY, TOO! I PUT ANITA'S REMAINS IN AN OLD TRUNK, BOUGHT A TICKET TO PEORIA, ILLINOIS, AND HAD IT SHIPPED ON AHEAD. OF COURSE, I'LL NEVER USE THE TICKET...

THE END.



# COMING UP NEXT FROM GLADSTONE



## The Vault of Horror #1, featuring:

- "Star Light, Star Bright" by Johnny Craig
- "While the Cat's Away" by Jack Davis
- "Smoke Wrings" by Reed Crandall
- "Where There's a Will" by Graham Ingels
- "The Wall" by Johnny Craig
- "House of Horror" by Harvey Kurtzman
- "The Mad Magician" by Harry Harrison and Wally Wood
- "The Thing in the Swamp" by Al Feldstein

ON SALE MAY, 1990



## WEIRD SCIENCE #1, featuring:

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- "Only Time Will Tell" by Harry Harrison and Wally Wood
- "The Men of Tomorrow" by Jack Kamen
- "Trip into the Unknown" by Harvey Kurtzman

ON SALE JUNE, 1990





(continued from inside front cover)

ourselves. That is why **Tales From the Crypt**, **The Vault of Horror**, and **The Haunt of Fear** are as apt today as they were forty years ago.

If we see a victim being stalked by an ax-murderer with the requisite cleaver in hand, our sensation will be terror; but let that murderer be a zombie, a vampire, a werewolf, or anything akin, and our response is horror. That's what E.C.s are all about.

In make-believe horror there is always something hidden, something still and ever-



concealed, some forbidden knowledge, a kept secret. We don't quite know. But we would like to find out if we could do so safely. That's why Gladstone feels E.C. horror will strike the same responsive chord with readers today as it did in the 1950s. It's generally acknowledged that horror is not just an **aspect** of human experience, but a **central part** of it!

Had Newton really been right, and had there really been laws to govern all change, there could be no horror; only temporary ignorance, only terror. The sleep of reason, contended Goya in 1798, produces monsters and monsters have always been the prime carriers of horror. They are always "out there," rising from the ooze of the subconscious, like sea-beasts on the horizons of ancient maps and they are never totally **nonhuman**. The ancient monsters—the centaur, the sphinx, the minotaur—are partly brute and partly human, and the brute part is not in itself frightening. So too the modern monsters—the vampire, the Frankenstein monster, and the werewolf—are images of horror not because they do dreadful things to us (although they may well), but because they block our attempts to classify, categorize, and hence control them.

H. G. Wells generated intense horror in **The Island of Dr. Moreau** (1896) simply by dispassionately describing the harmless mutants created by the "mad scientist" who infused human forms and attributes into the animal world; Victor Hugo

achieved the same effect by "crossing" Quasimodo with the gargoyle.

It would be nice to think that a proper education could rid one of a hunger for horror, but theologians like John Wesley have always known better. Horror images have always been more than fear-jerkers; they are invariably the most subtle projections of buried and repressed fear. When it comes right down to it, the fascinating question is not why monsters were so suddenly obvious in the late eighteenth century, but how they could have been suppressed with such success for so long!

The invocation of horror has always been present in the English tradition from **Beowulf** on. In modern versions we forget the victims and even the hero, but we remember the monster! Everyone who read the original E.C.'s remembers a favorite today. . . and it is usually the monster or the deed that stands out. Thinking back to your own high school or college literature class, do you remember who, for instance, kills Dracula? How is the Frankenstein monster destroyed? Are we sure the werewolf is dead? Monsters have become bogeymen, and as the child in **Halloween** says, "Ya can't ever kill the bogeyman."

We read for enjoyment, including horror. But we



keep coming back because of **memories**. A cult of E.C. collectors began in the '50s and has survived to this day, though most think of themselves just as "fans." Some of the same ones who made contact with each other through the Letters to the GhouLunatics pages in those days still are in touch with each other today.

(We would like to thank Jim Twitchell, who is currently Alumni Professor of English at the University of Florida, for his permission to excerpt portions from his book, **Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror**, published by Oxford University Press. We apologize for any points that may have been lost by our abbreviations of his words or any changes of meaning that may have resulted from our blending of his thoughts with an occasional brief insertion of our own.

—The Publishers)



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